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Hints & Outlines
for
Children's Services



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HINTS AND OUTLINES
FOR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES.



HINTS AND OUTLINES

FOR

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

(ON CHURCH LINES)

BY

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TO THE
REV. C. E. AND MRS. LAMB,
IN REMEMBRANCE
OF
MANY HAPPY SUNDAYS PASSED WITH THEM
AT
ST. MARY'S, SHEFFIELD.

P R E F A C E.

THE aim of the writer in this volume is to furnish a handbook, on Church of England lines, for the assistance of those amongst the clergy or laity who have to conduct children's services. The work is divided into two parts, the first containing hints, suggested by experience, as to the service itself and the best methods of conducting it; the second consisting mainly of outlines which can be used as the basis of addresses at such services. An appendix contains a full-length address, expanded from one of the outlines given; on the principle that "example is better than precept," it may show how the other outlines should be dealt with. It may be well to add that similar addresses are, with slight modifications, well suited for many adult congregations, and the outlines given may be used successfully for cottage lectures or with village audiences. There is no need for any one to follow slavishly any given outline; rather it will be better, every way, if the outline start some suggestive thought which may then be worked up independently

in view of the special audience to be addressed. As a fact, the outlines are notes and summaries of addresses which have actually been delivered by the writer. For over twenty years, both as a layman and as a clergyman, he has had the privilege of preaching to children, whilst, as a child, he used to listen with delight to the Rev. E. Wagner and the Rev. J. Vaughan of Brighton. It would be impossible to estimate his indebtedness to these two preachers, especially the latter; and, though there is, in these outlines, little enough to suggest resemblance, he still regards Mr. Vaughan's sermons as the model of what such sermons ought to be.

It should be added that, of the outlines here given, about half were printed, some ten years back, in the Church Sunday School Magazine and elsewhere. The remainder have never before been printed.

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*Note.—*It has been thought well to classify the outlines as above, but many of those for special occasions are also suitable for other Sundays.

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HINTS AND OUTLINES

FOR

CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

PART I.

IN dealing with the subject of children's services, some are inclined to make a distinction between those held in a church and those held, instead, in a school-room. But, as a fact, the ideal service must always be that held in the church. School-room services, however necessary, should resemble the church service as much as possible. In the church, no doubt, certain rules have to be complied with which need not be so stringently enforced elsewhere. The structure of the service may be more modified in the school-room than in the church, and a layman may conduct it in the one, whereas a clergyman is necessary in the other. Still, if possible, in a school-room service greater care is needed to secure reverence; and slovenliness, since it is more easy, should be guarded against with yet greater care. In these hints a school-room service is taken as the basis for

the suggestions made. Such services are now common, and it seems inevitable that they should be so ; still, wherever the choice lies between service in church and service in the school, the former has such manifest advantages that it ought, most certainly, to be selected. Supposing, however, a school-room service, how had it better be conducted ? For a service in church, in so far as it is elastic, the suggestions offered may readily be applied.

1. And first, as to *place*. If a special room can be provided—not used, on the Sunday, for any other purpose—it is best to use such a room. If any other room is chosen it ought to be rearranged before the service so that, *e.g.*, the associations of the Sunday School may not interfere with those proper to the service. In arranging the room two points should be kept in view :—(1.) The aspect of a church should, so far as possible, be aimed at. The school service must, in any case, be accepted as introductory to the service in the church, and the more the room can be made like the church the more likely are the children to form church habits. (2.) The children should be grouped around the desk, none of them being allowed out of sight of the conductor. He should be able to catch the eyes of all, whatever part of the service they may be engaged in. With this end it is well that the desk should be raised above the level of the congregation ; and the children should be taught to kneel towards it, and not, during the prayers, to turn their backs upon it. A table raised upon a small platform, with kneeling stool behind it, and small hand lectern placed upon it, will be all the apparatus,

beyond books, which need be provided. Even less than this will do if the requisite conditions can be fulfilled otherwise; only let the church aspect be secured so far as may be, and let the conductor feel that all the children are absolutely within sight and hearing.

2. As to the conductor. It is always well that he should wear a distinctive garment. Laymen have as much right to a surplice as clergymen, and in addressing children no garment could be better, for it attracts attention when inclined to wander, and fixes the eyes from the very character of its material. Speaking from experience, it is far easier to address children when habited in a surplice than it is even in a black gown, although that also has ecclesiastical associations.

The conductor or officiating minister should behave, in all respects, as a clergyman; and he should know exactly how the service is to be conducted, so that each part may follow in due order. If he have at hand a brief sketch of the service, with hymns, &c., entered in the proper places, he will find it a help in the performance of his duties, and the knowledge of its existence will promote confidence. Still he need not be constantly referring to it, visibly dependent upon the hints which it affords. He must remember that he is conducting public worship, and that, with such sympathetic mortals as children, very much will needs depend upon the reality of his own devotion. Even in church it jars one's feelings to see the minister finding his places whilst the "Gloria Patri" is being sung! How can he join in the song of praise when he is manifestly occupied about other matters?

In a school service one cannot be too reverent, and to be reverent one must be composed and recollected. If the service is mapped out clearly in one's mind, each part will succeed another naturally ; the minister will conduct with quietness and with confidence, and his manifest devotion will tell on others. It may be permissible, perhaps, in the hymn before the sermon, just to glance through one's notes and make certain of the opening ; but even this is a concession to human weakness rather than consistent with any counsel of perfection. It is permissible because, for many, it is necessary ; if it can be avoided, it is better to avoid it.

3. As to the service. Here, again, two points have to be kept in mind. For children we need as much variety as is possible, but, the service being essentially a church service, variety must be limited by the possibilities of our Liturgy. A short extempore prayer before or after the address may be allowed, but is not, as a rule, to be recommended ; and a short preparatory prayer before the service actually begins has, certainly, a good effect. With these exceptions, the service should be framed strictly upon Prayer-Book lines, and this can now easily be done in accordance with the "shortened service Act." It has been found useful, where one edition of the Prayer-Book is used by a majority of those present, to give out from time to time *the page* as a help to inexperienced place-finders. Thus, e.g., "The Magnificat, p. 10," or "The Psalms, p. 240." When this is done a slight pause should follow to allow of the place being found, and where there are young

children present, the practice is certainly a good one.

The following form for introductory prayer before service may prove acceptable. The children should say it together, clause by clause, all kneeling :—

“ O Lord God, our heavenly Father : help us to remember that we are in Thy presence ; teach us to pray to Thee ; teach us how to praise Thee ; make us quiet and attentive ; give us some lesson which we may learn and practise ; and guard us from all wandering thoughts ; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.”

After this or some similar prayer, perfect silence should be maintained until the service opens.

As a scheme for the service, the following is suggested :—

1. Opening sentence, “ I will arise,” &c.
2. “ Dearly beloved, I pray and beseech you as many as,” &c.
3. General confession.
4. Collect, “ O Lord, we beseech Thee,” &c. (from close of communion service).
5. “ Our Father,” and versicles following.
- [6. *For morning*, “ Venite.”]
7. Psalms (selected from Psalms for the day, *if suitable*).
8. A short lesson from Old Testament.
9. *Morning*, “ Te Deum.”
Evening, “ Magnificat” or “ Cantate.”
10. A short lesson from New Testament.
[*N.B.*—7 and 8 or 9 and 10 may be omitted if thought advisable.]
11. *Morning*, “ Jubilate” or “ Benedictus.”
Evening, “ Nunc Dimittis” or “ Deus Misereatur.”

12. Creed, and versicles following.
13. The Three Collects.
14. Hymn.
15. Prayers for "Clergy and people," "All sorts and conditions of men," "General thanksgiving," "Collect of St. Chrysostom," and "Grace."
16. Hymn.

The second hymn will be followed by collect and address; after which another hymn may be sung, and the service conclude with some form of benediction.

A difficulty is sometimes found in selecting suitable passages of Scripture. To meet this a children's Lectionary is appended, which may, possibly, be found serviceable.

The Psalms for the day should be examined beforehand, as some of them are unsuitable for children. The conductor of the service may well be left to select those which he deems advisable.

Hymns, also, should be chosen with discretion. We need not confine ourselves, by any means, to hymns written and composed for children. What is wanted is simplicity and the expression of feelings with which all can sympathise. A children's hymn-book, such as that of Mrs. Carey Brock, or the collection of the Church of England Sunday-School Institute, furnishes a plentiful supply of hymns such as children and adults can enjoy equally.

4. As to the address—one need hardly say that it should be lively, interesting, and not too long. It should also, as a general rule, lead up to some one very simple and definite application; and if the

application is of such a nature that it can at once be acted on it will be an advantage. To make an address interesting and lively it is by no means necessary that it shall be crowded with anecdotes. If an anecdote is really apt nothing can well be more effective ; but anecdotes lugged in for the sake of telling them are likely to distract attention—like brass-headed nails driven too far into a wall, nothing can be got to hang upon them. Some Scripture narrative picturesquely told is often more effective than a multitude of anecdotes ; and attention can be equally well secured by simple questioning which it requires some thought to answer. The speaker should have his address well prepared, with the main points clearly mapped out beforehand. In delivering it he should use great freedom, not binding himself slavishly even to his own notes. He should face the children eye to eye and watch the effect as he proceeds ; he may often find, under such circumstances, that he can do far better than his notes suggest—the stimulus of an alert and attentive audience prompting him to some novel way of putting things. Nothing can take the place of careful preparation, but the better any one is prepared beforehand—the firmer the grip he has upon his subject—the more free and unfettered will he find himself, after a little practice, when he comes to speak. The outline addresses given in this volume are all from the compiler's own notes, but they are likely to be found most useful by those who look to them rather for suggestions, and who will work up from them new outlines such as may better suit their own personal idiosyncrasies. From

a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes is usually long enough for an address to children, and it is well, at starting, after giving out the text, to get all present to repeat it together. Before concluding, a few recapitulatory questions are desirable which may lead up to a terse enforcement of the application. We have all been children once, and it is to be hoped that in the depths of our nature we are children still. The great thing is, in talking to children, to talk to them in *their* own tongue, and this can only be secured by letting the child within us speak. Nor is this so hard as it might seem, if only we will face our audience—one can hardly help speaking naturally and simply when the very expression of the children's faces suggests the sort of language they require.

In conclusion, nothing more is here attempted than to give hints and helps for children's services. Experience will do the rest far more effectually than any amount of explanation. Still hints and helps have a value of their own, and those here given have been fairly tested by the writer. His aim is not to provide crutches for those who, if they need them, are incompetent for their work; but to help those who have the will, so that they may the better help themselves.

NEW TESTAMENT LECTICONARY OF PASSAGES
SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES.

(Founded in the main upon the Sunday Epistles and Gospels.)

<i>Advent, I.</i>	.	.	Rom. xiii. 8-14	.	Matt. xxi. 1-13.
" II.	.	.	2 Tim. iii. 14-17	.	Luke iv. 16-30.
" III.	.	.	.	.	Matt. xi. 2-10.
" IV.	.	.	Phil. iv. 4-7	.	John i. 19-28.
<i>Christmas day.</i>	.	.	.	.	Luke ii. 1-20.
<i>Sunday after Christmas.</i>	.	.	Gal. iv. 1-7	.	Matt. ii. 13-18.
<i>Epiphany.</i>	.	.	.	.	Matt. ii. 1-12.
<i>After Epiphany, I.</i>	.	.	Rom. xii. 1-5	.	Luke ii. 41-52.
" II.	.	.	Rom. xii. 9-16	.	John ii. 1-11.
" III.	.	.	Rom. xii. 16-21	.	Matt. viii. 1-13.
" IV.	.	.	Rom. xiii. 1-7	.	Matt. viii. 23-34.
" V.	.	.	Col. iii. 12-17	.	Matt. xiii. 24-30.
" VI.	.	.	1 John iii. 1-8	.	Matt. xxv. 1-13.
<i>Septuagesima.</i>	.	.	1 Cor. ix. 24-27	.	Matt. xx. 1-16.
<i>Sexagesima.</i>	.	.	.	.	Luke viii. 4-15.
<i>Quinquagesima.</i>	.	.	1 Cor. xiii.	.	Luke xviii. 31-43.
<i>Lent, I.</i>	.	.	.	.	Matt. iv. 1-11.
" II.	.	.	.	.	Matt. xv. 21-28.
" III.	.	.	Eph. v. 1-14	.	Luke xv. 11-32.
" IV.	.	.	.	.	John vi. 1-14.
" V.	.	.	.	.	Luke ix. 28-36.
<i>Sunday before Easter.</i>	.	.	Phil. ii. 5-11	.	{ Matt. xxvii. 27-54. Luke xix. 28-44.
<i>Easter day.</i>	.	.	Col. iii. 1-6	.	{ Luke xxiv. 13-35. John xx. 1-10.
<i>After Easter, I.</i>	.	.	Acts x. 34-43	.	John xx. 19-29.
" II.	.	.	1 Peter ii. 19-25	.	John x. 11-16.
" III.	.	.	.	.	John xiii. 1-17.

<i>After Easter, IV.</i>	.	James i. 17-21	.	Matt. xix. 13-22.
" " <i>V.</i>	.	James i. 22-27	.	Luke xi. 1-13.
<i>Sunday after Ascension day</i>	.	.	.	Acts i. 1-14.
<i>Whit-Sunday</i>	.	.	.	Acts ii. 1-12.
<i>Trinity Sunday</i>	.	Rev. iv.	.	John iii. 1-15.
<i>After Trinity, I.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xvi. 19-31.
" " <i>II.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xiv. 16-24.
" " <i>III.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xv. 1-10.
" " <i>IV.</i>	.	.	.	Luke vi. 36-42.
" " <i>V.</i>	.	1 Peter iii. 8-15	.	Luke v. 1-11.
" " <i>VI.</i>	.	Rev. vii. 9-17	.	Matt. xx. 20-28.
" " <i>VII.</i>	.	.	.	Mark viii. 1-9.
" " <i>VIII.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. vii. 15-27.
" " <i>IX.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xvi. 1-9.
" " <i>X.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xix. 41-48.
" " <i>XI.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xviii. 9-17.
" " <i>XII.</i>	.	.	.	Mark vii. 31-37.
" " <i>XIII.</i>	.	.	.	Luke x. 25-37.
" " <i>XIV.</i>	.	.	.	Luke xvii. 11-19.
" " <i>XV.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. vi. 24-34.
" " <i>XVI.</i>	.	.	.	Luke vii. 11-17.
" " <i>XVII.</i>	.	Eph. iv. 1-6	.	Luke xiv. 1-11.
" " <i>XVIII.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. xxii. 34-46.
" " <i>XIX.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. ix. 1-8.
" " <i>XX.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. xxii. 1-14.
" " <i>XXI.</i>	.	Eph. vi. 10-20	.	John iv. 46-54.
" " <i>XXII.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. xviii. 21-35.
" " <i>XXIII.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. xxii. 15-22.
" " <i>XXIV.</i>	.	.	.	Matt. ix. 18-26.
" " <i>XXV.</i>	.	.	.	John vi. 5-14.

Note.—It has not been thought necessary to suggest readings from the Old Testament. Such will naturally be selected from the more familiar Bible stories, and will, mainly, be confined to passages in Genesis and the historical books. If it be remembered that, in the Church's order, Genesis is begun on Septuagesima Sunday, the task of selection will be comparatively easy.

PART II.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The object of these outlines is to *suggest* thought, rather than to *save* it. To be used successfully they must be digested and appropriated. *Seeds* themselves, the resulting growth, in the shape of an address, must depend a great deal upon the gardening bestowed upon them. As to the method of gardening, the following hints may prove acceptable.

1. Let the outline be read through carefully ; its references verified and noted ; and its central idea mastered.

2. Let a new outline be drawn up by the person proposing to deliver the address. This may differ very considerably from the original ; but as the compiler's *own* production, and sketched with an eye to his own special congregation, it should be far more valuable for actual use under the special circumstances.

3. From this second outline let the actual address be thought out. It may even be delivered—*sotto voce*—to an imaginary congregation. Should any new point come to light during this process, it can be noted in the sketch drawn up, in its proper connection.

4. In delivering the address, having mastered the main points, do not be tied down as to details; knowing *what* you mean to say, there is no need to be too particular as to the *way* in which you mean to say it. Previous prayer will give confidence, and often the very best things are struck out—sparklike blossoms—upon contact with the audience.

The writer of these outlines would further emphasise the fact that in all points they are meant to be *suggestive*. Where, *e.g.*, he mentions a Scripture character, it is not intended that such character should be merely alluded to in passing; rather it is meant that the special circumstances which render such an allusion applicable should first be *thought* out in preparation, and afterwards *pictured* out in the address. To take an instance: in the outline entitled "Eyes," Eve is mentioned as an illustration. The hint as enlarged in the actual address might take some such shape as this: "There is a beautiful garden, and in it a tree with pleasant fruit; a woman is looking at the fruit, and a serpent twining round the tree seems to be telling her that the fruit is good. Can you tell me what they call that woman? (Eve.) What has she been told about the fruit? Who by? What ought she to do when it is offered to her? What is she doing? (Looking at it.) What is she going to do?" &c. Slightly altered treatment would be necessary supposing the address were not catechetical, but in any case the hint given in the outline is meant to be pregnant with pictorial suggestions.

Much more might be added, but possibly the

foregoing will suffice. Let those who use the outlines put some faith in the experience of the author. Let them trust the children to whom they speak, and make a point of speaking to them eye to eye. Let them, above all, trust God, and, helping themselves, expect Him to help them. There can be little doubt, in such case, that a blessing will rest upon their honest efforts.

I.—PREPARING THE WAY.

“Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”—MATT. xi. 10.

I. THE KING COMING.

[Queen on her way to Parliament—crowds to see—out-riders on before to give notice and clear the road.] So when King of Heaven came to earth; only, way not blocked with *people*, cf. Isa. xl. 3, “*wilderness*,” “*desert*;” blocked with other obstacles; still, a messenger sent before to clear the road and give notice. [Picture out John Baptist, work he had to do, and how he did it.]

2. Same King coming again—way needs preparing as before. Who will do it? “Ministers and stewards” of God’s “mysteries.” But not only they, others also; every one can do something—even *you*. [Cf. Party of navvies making a road—all work together under the supervision of one. Ministers are, in some sort, *supervisors*; but the smallest child may be a navvy in that band which prepares the road for Christ.]

II. THE ROAD BY WHICH HE COMES.

Palace in Heaven; has to come down into this world and find His way even into men’s hearts. Once

the way was open. How it got blocked up. What like now? [Cf.—Cottage with bolted door in some weed-grown garden, reached off an obstructed highway. So with our hearts: pride and selfishness bolt the door. Bad habits overgrow the path. The highway is blocked up by worldliness of all kinds.]

III. WORK OF THE HERALDS.

Are you one of Christ's navvies? If so, how work?

1. Tell others that the King is coming and they ought to get ready.

2. Each must begin with himself. Is the door of your heart open? Are you diligently rooting up the weeds of bad habits? overturning the rocks of worldliness, so that Christ can get to you? Particularise the obstacles: idleness, self-will, &c.; all such need removing if you would help to prepare Christ's way.

3. *Tools*.—Faith and prayer are the two most important. [Boy trying to lift iron slab by ring fastened to it. (1.) Pulls and pulls with both hands—instead of pulling it up, it pulls him down. (2.) Holds by one hand the hand of a strong helper and pulls with other. (Faith.) (3.) Asks strong helper to help him pull. (Prayer.) So at last succeeds.]

Conclude. Christ is coming—way terribly blocked up. Would *you* like to be one of His navvies and help to prepare the way? Then be earnest and use the right tools, Faith and Prayer.

II. TRADING FOR CHRIST.

"*Occupy till I come.*"—LUKE xix. 13.

"*Occupy*," an old word which used to mean *trade*, *i.e.*, buy and sell (*cf.* Ezek. xxvii. 9, &c.) Small children fond of playing at shop ; boys fond of *bartering*, &c. Our Lord in this parable tells a story of some servants who had to make profits for their master by trading whilst he was away. He Himself like the master, we like the servants ; all entrusted with some of His property as merchandise with which we may trade for Him. Consider—

I. WHAT WE HAVE TO TRADE WITH. This parable speaks of *pounds* ; another (Matt. xxv. 14) speaks of *talents*. Talents much more valuable than pounds. The parable of the talents spoken to apostles, who had great and special gifts ; this parable spoken to ordinary disciples, who had more ordinary gifts ; still *all* had something, and whether their gifts were great or small, the Master expected that they would do the best they could with them. What are our gifts? Some are called *clever* ; cleverness is a gift to be traded with. Some have more *time*, some more *money*, some more *health* than others. All these things are gifts—perhaps rather say *loans*—which

our Lord wants us to use for Him, so that we may win Him profit by their use.

II. HOW WE OUGHT TO TRADE. Take a few instances:—

1. *Time.* Some say, “My time is my own.” Quite a mistake; my time is my Master’s. If I only use it for myself, I am embezzling His goods. I have to try and exchange it for something better, so that He may be the richer. [Illustration:—Some one wants helping, a baby to be looked after, a blind person to be read to, an errand to be run, &c. Exchange my time for gratitude, &c., or, Lessons to be learnt, makes me better able to do good work afterwards; so more useful, &c. If I do this, then not *losing* time, but changing it for something better, making a profit out of it.]

2. *Words.* Don’t *seem* worth very much, but they are. “Good words are worth much and cost little.” Make friends. Comfort the sorrowful, &c. Think what our Lord’s words have done! Some are afraid to speak when they can and ought to do so (wrapping up their pound in a napkin of cowardice), so missing many good bargains. Some make enemies with foolish words, a terribly bad investment. What are you doing with your words?

3. *Money.* Not much, perhaps, but some. A penny in the missionary box may gain more profit than sixpence at the sweet shop! Remember, our money is really Christ’s money. He will ask us one day what gains we have made with it for Him. Might

take many other instances : our *experience*, such as it is, our *cleverness*, &c. All can and should be invested for Christ ; so too we shall obtain for ourselves the truest happiness and most lasting peace.

III. MOTIVE FOR DILIGENCE IN TRADING. The Master away, but He may be back at any moment. [Illustration :—Clerk left in charge of shop ; how anxious to show how well he can carry on the business, so when master comes back be praised, perhaps rewarded and promoted.] When our Lord comes back, what shall we have to tell Him about our success ? [Illustrate from the parable, and apply.] Terrible to hear the unprofitable servant's doom pronounced on us, and to know it might have been so different !

[*Note*.—An incidental lesson from this subject may be suggested here, though room has not been found for it in the sketch. All our talents are only ours on trust. (1.) *Warning*. I have nothing to be proud of, and I must not judge others uncharitably. (2.) *Comfort* (the other side of the warning). I need not be disheartened though others judge uncharitably of me.

An illustration of the parable may be found in an Eastern apologue quoted by Trench in his work on the Parables. A certain man, going on a journey, left in charge of two friends two sacks of grain. On his return he asked for his own again. One friend brought him out his sack, with the contents mouldy,

rotten, worthless ; the other pointed to a field just ripening for the harvest, and received his friend's approval, with instructions to fill him a sackful of the grain and keep the rest as his reward.]

III.—JESUS CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”—LUKE ii. 11.

All have birthdays. Come downstairs, first thing in the morning, what do friends say? and besides often give us something. Sometimes, too, like to keep our birthdays rather differently from other days; cake made, invite friends, have birthday party or feast. Christmas day is our Lord's birthday; may keep that in same way.

I. THE BIRTHDAY GREETING.

All know what we say on birthdays—“Many happy returns of the day”—really a prayer, means “may you have,” *i.e.*, “may God give you,” many happy returns. Don't forget this whenever you say the words to your friends.

Remember also that Jesus Christ is your friend. He has not forgotten you because He has gone up to heaven. If we really wish Him happiness that will make Him more happy. If (Luke xv. 10) the angels can be made more joyful, surely what we think and say may make Jesus Christ more joyful.

All, however, no good unless we *mean* what we

say—therefore must show that we really mean it by offering—

II. THE BIRTHDAY GIFT.

1. What can we give? Nothing ours—even we ourselves “not our own” (1 Cor. vi. 19). All Jesus Christ’s already, yet given into our keeping that if we will we may give Him all! [May illustrate from the story in “Misunderstood:”—*Little boy wants to give father a birthday present—goes into shop—chooses present—no money—father has to pay—still father, all the same, values present as his boy’s gift.*]

2. What would He like to have? This the main question.

(i.) *Our hearts.* Prov. xxiii. 26. Asks for this gift. Perhaps have given it already. If so, may give it again. [*Man may give field—afterwards, when crops come up, give them as part of field—same gift, yet different.*]

(ii.) *Our bodies*—His—for His use—if we give them. Eyes, ears, feet, hands, all His—e.g., blind person—can’t read—Jesus Christ wants him read to—you give your eyes, no good *giving* them, unless ready to do what Jesus Christ wants doing with them.

(iii.) *Our possessions.* Cf. Mark ix. 41. “In My name”—what it means. If we give anything for Christ’s sake, because we think Christ wants us to give it, then we give it to Him. [*Illust.—Missionary money, &c.*]

All this what we can do to give Christ pleasure on His birthday. But He, too, likes to give us pleasure, so invites us to—

III. THE BIRTHDAY FEAST.

Knows we cannot be happy without Him—wants us to be happy—so willing to feed us (John vi. 35). The food He gives makes us strong—gives us the best kind of happiness. He offers it to you to-day, will not you come to the feast?

Conclusion.—Our brother at home—we still at school. Yet, even so, can increase His happiness, and allow Him to increase ours—one of these days all at home together. How happy when *all* keep His birthday at home in His Father's house!

IV.—THE END OF A YEAR.

“Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof.”—
ECCLES. vii. 8.

[The sketch is drawn for last Sunday of Christian year, but it may easily be adapted, if required, to the last Sunday in December.]

To-day the last Sunday of the Christian year. (Explain difference between Christian year and ordinary year,—the one beginning on Advent Sunday, the other on January 1st.)

Our text says “*end*” better than “*beginning*,” then :—

I.—THE END OF A YEAR SHOULD BE BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING.

Services to-day, *e.g.*, should be better than those last Advent—more hearty and more helpful. Ought to be, for we are all a year older, and as children's bodies grow *bigger*, so they should grow *wiser* [minds growing—after due use of lessons] and *better* [spirits growing—after due use of services such as these and other “means of grace”].

Not everybody gets wiser and better as they get older [*cf.* Judas, &c.] How make sure that the

end of a year shall show improvement? Remember: year made up of months; months of weeks; weeks of days. If end of each day, each week, each month, better than the beginning, then the end of the year must be. [*Cf.* staircase—twelve main flights—each with four or five small flights of seven steps each.] Let us see that each day we get *up* one step.

“How?” Seen very little child trying to climb stairs—cannot manage all alone—what do? So our Father in heaven always ready to give us help, only what needed? “Ask and ye shall—” So prayer at the beginning of the day—taking hold of our Father’s hand—and then act as God shows us how to act, doing what we ought to do:—

“ Learn while you learn,
Play while you play,
So God will help you
To live through the day.”

Then, too, at end of day, look back—think “what done? what left undone?” [Roman emperor—no good deed to remember—“a lost day.”] Then pray again for forgiveness and for help. Week by week try the same method. So, little by little, step by step, onwards and upwards, “end” must be “better than beginning.” And if so, then:—

II.—THE END OF LIFE WILL BE BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING.

Life made up of years, as years of days. Time of birth a glad time [“another baby!”] but time of death, though sad to those left behind, may be yet

more glad to the person dying, if he can look back on a well-spent life [e.g., our Lord "It is finished." What? the work God had given Him to do.]

When we come to look back, it will not seem long. Last Advent Sunday it seemed long to look on for a whole year, but it does not seem long to look back upon it. So Life. If end is to be better than beginning, we must make the best of each day, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth," &c.

Conclusion.—Remember two things:—

1. *God's glory should be our object.*

Cf. Haydn. Each page of his "Creation" headed "to the sole glory of God." So too a Mr. Turner, who made money in trade, and built almshouses, schools, &c., headed every page in his ledger, "To the glory of God." We want Life's pages to have that heading.

2. *Perseverance our principle.*

Step by step. In seventh century—Isidore—a boy at school—could not get on—ran away. Hot sun—rests beside little spring gushing over rock. Large stone underneath worn away by the continual dropping. Why should not constant trying wear away the difficulty of lessons? Went back—persevered—made progress—at last a bishop and a teacher, whose writings are still read.

So with us. Apply.

V.—ALL THINGS NEW.

“Behold, I make all things new.”—Rev. xxi. v.

New year, right time to think about *new* things. All like new things. [New books, new clothes, toys. Don’t call them *toys*, but marbles, tops, bats, cricket-balls, &c., according to age of children and the prevailing epidemic.]

Ever see a new thing made? [Can illustrate from experience—a coin, bonnet, &c.] Once—long ago—

I. A NEW WORLD.

Picture out. Angels looking on. What they would see (Gen. i.) What God said about it. “I wonder what the penny (bonnet, or whatever else has been referred to) I saw made is like *now*.” “What is the world like *now*?” How spoilt! Like old penny, or dog-eared book. One day, however, it will be made new again (Rev. xxi. 1). [Penny may be brightened up, book cleaned and rebound. So God knows how to make old world new.] “Like to see that?” May, perhaps, but first other new things to think about.

II. NEW BODIES.

World *made* like a garden. What like *now*?

Perhaps most like a graveyard. People build houses on it—do all manner of other things with it—but, in end, they are put away beneath it. If want to enjoy new *world*, must have new *bodies*. Suppose had old—get sick and weak—blind—deaf—dying. What good new world then? So among “*all* things” God will give new bodies. Old ones in graveyard, *seeds*; new ones come up, *flowers*.

III. NEW SELVES.

What makes bodies die? (Wages of sin.) But bodies can't sin (*e.g.*, dead body—picture out). *We* sin. Suppose we had new bodies—put in new world—old selves still go wrong—spoil bodies—so spoil world. [Boy and copy-book—dirty page—perhaps not well—hand shakes, &c. Turn over next page—any better? Only if boy is better.] So must have new selves. How? God must make *heart* new. Pray, “Create in me a clean heart, O God! *Renew* a right spirit within me.”

Now trace mischief up. [Bad water—poisoned stream—trace up to source and remove evil *there*.] Where will God begin? (1.) New self. (2.) New bodies. (3.) New world.

Beginning a new year. How did you get on last? Full of mistakes, &c. Will this be better? If God make *you* better. Ask Him, and He will.

Note.—In delivering this address to a town congregation another link may be introduced between I. and II., viz., “A New City.” Picture out from Rev. xxi. 2 and 10, xxii. 5.

VI.—OUR COPY, AND HOW TO COPY IT.

“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example.”

—I PET. ii. 21.

The word St. Peter uses for *example* is an old word for “writing-copy.” He too had had to learn writing. [Describe. Teacher would spread sand on floor; then trace copy. Peter and rest copy it with sticks in the sand.] Now that he had grown up, another copy—the life of his Master—to be copied in his life. So then our lives like copy-books—the years pages—the copy Christ—our part to copy the copy. How?

I. LOOK WELL AT THE COPY.

[Illustrate from copy-book experiences, comparing up-strokes and down-strokes. Shape of letters, &c., not only to be looked *at*, but looked *into*, until we see *how* it has been written.]

So with our copy, needs to be *studied*: not enough to have a Bible with the story of Christ’s life, must study it, try to understand it; see *why* our Lord did this thing or that thing.

II. KEEP LOOKING AT THE COPY.

[Illustrate again from writing experiences, what boys and girls do—look at copy for first line, and then at that line for second line, and so on, each line

getting worse and worse. What they ought to do—for each line look up again to the copy.

So with life. Each day like a new line. No good to think only of yesterday—if bad may discourage, if good may make us conceited. As St. Paul says, we must “leave those things which are behind,” and each day “look off” anew “unto Jesus, who is the Author and Perfecter of our faith.”

III. BE CAREFUL HOW YOU POINT YOUR PEN.

[Illustrate from writing-master's instructions; point the pen anyhow and the letters slope in all directions; attend to the pointing of the pen, and the letters seem to come right almost without thinking about them.]

What the pen is to letters, that the will is to actions. To keep the will pointed in the right direction is necessary if we would live rightly. And the right direction, what is that? God's will and the way *that* points—*cf.*, our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane, “not *My* will, but *Thine* be done.” Take some case illustrating the difference between doing what we *like* and doing what we *ought*.

Thus three things needed if we want to copy the copy as we ought to do. (Recapitulate.) Very hard, but in learning to write the teacher is always at hand to help, and so also in learning to live Jesus Christ, who sets the copy, is the Teacher always at hand to help us copy it. If we want to do right He Himself, if we ask Him, will teach us how. Let us remember what we have to do, and who it is who alone can help us do it.

VII.—OUR LIVING SACRIFICE.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—ROM. xii. 1.

A text like a ball of thread—to unwind it must get hold of an end. Try this one with the word mercies.

I. THE MERCIES OF GOD.

1. What is *mercy*?

Not quite the same as *pity*. Picture out: Man among thieves (Luke x. 30). Suppose child passes—very sorry—*pities him*—can't help—not got *power*. When Levite passed, might pity, but did not help—had not the *will*. Good Samaritan *pitied*, and had *power*, and had *will* to help, so (ver. 37) "he showed *mercy* on him."

2. God's mercy.

We like the man among thieves—only all our misery comes through—? And sin is doing what God tells us not to do. [Suppose the man in the parable had been the good Samaritan's servant—robbed his master and was running off with his goods when he got into trouble.] So God's mercy has something more than pity, power, and will—it has *forgiveness* too.

May illustrate from story of Israelites (*cf.* Nehemiah ix. 19-31); further apply to ourselves—

(1.) What God has done for us. Life—friends—beautiful world—food, &c.

(2.) How badly we have treated Him—forgotten Him—not spoken to Him—disobeyed Him. [If *I* found you in food, clothes, &c., and you treated *me* so badly, what should I do?] But—

(3.) God always merciful to us. When ill made us well. When in trouble brought us out of it. Sent His own Son.

II. WHAT RETURN FROM US?

Ps. cxvi. 12. What answer does St. Paul give? "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." Illustrate from what the Israelites used to do. See Lev. i. Picture out—great court before tabernacle—brazen altar—man bringing up bullock—or lamb—or dove. See what is done to it. Describe. Can *we* do anything of this kind? Each of us got an offering which he can bring—his *body*. Not a bullock, or a lamb, or a dove, but himself. Are you bringing your body as a living sacrifice? Remember—

1. *All* must be offered.

Hands to work for God—*feet* to go on errands for Him—*tongue* to speak for Him, &c.—above all, *heart* to love Him.

2. Must be offered through the Priest (Lev. i. 8; *cf.* Heb. xiii. 15, 16). "*By him.*"

In conclusion—may illustrate from the example of our Lord (*cf.* Heb. x. 5-7), and of St. Paul. "But we are only children." Yes, but children can offer

WE ARE SLOWLY BEING
TAKEN AWAY, I DON'T
SEE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
THINKING AS WE DO;
WE HAVE LEARNED IT
IN ROME, AND ARE
TAKEN AWAY, WE ARE
OLD FOLKS, BUT
MERCIFUL, WE ARE
TROUBLING, WE ARE

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• Heard
nocence ”
Innocence
at pictures

“Kneeling
or Father.”
3—playing
(3) Play-
Yet praying
.elsome child

World—not

this sacrifice as well. Give up all—*hands—feet—tongue—heart* to God. Offer them in Christ's name, through Him, and see whether He will not use them. [May illustrate from story of Samuel, to show how God uses those who are willing to be used.]

VIII.—RENEWED MINDS.

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—ROM. xii. 2.

Illustr.—Chameleon changes colour according to circumstances—*green* in fields, *red* against brick wall, *grey* in the dust. *We* can't change colour of our *skins* at pleasure, but can change colour of our *souls*, so be "*conformed*" to our world just as chameleon is to his. Think—

I. BEING CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.

How different we are at different times. Heard story of two pictures—"Guilt" and "Innocence" both painted from the same person, but *Innocence* was a child, and *Guilt* a man; might paint pictures of us quite as different, yet all in one day.

[e.g., Picture out. (1) Room—child kneeling—quiet—still—good resolutions—"Our Father." (2) School—sums—teacher not looking—playing with next boy, &c.—idle—not working. (3) Play-ground—angry—bullying—unkind. Yet praying child, and idle child, and unkind, quarrelsome child may be all one and the same.]

So natural to be conformed to the world—not

doing *right*, speaking *truly*, thinking *for ourselves*, but doing, speaking, thinking *as others do* and *think and speak*.

1. *Speaking.* How differently with different people—perhaps when get outside this morning, some one say, “I liked what the preacher said just now;” then you say, “Yes, very nice.” Or some one else say, “I *am* glad that’s over—tiresome stuff;” and you say, “Oh, so am I”!—*cf.* Peter with *Christ*, “Though I should die with Thee,” &c. Yet with *Roman soldiers*, “Then began he to curse and to swear.”

2. *Thought.* How often like something, then hear some one say it’s not good taste to like it; so ashamed and get to dislike. If we get to speak as others, soon get to think as others. Thoughts control words at first, but words bias thoughts afterwards.

3. *Actions.* Follow from (1) and (2). All know how they “take tone” of company. “Do at Rome as Rome does.”

St. Paul says we are *not* to be like this. See what he says we *are* to be:—

II. TRANSFORMED.

Might think “not conformed to *this* world but to *next*.” This not enough. Change (contrast chameleon) must be more than *skin* deep. “Transformed by the renewing of your *mind*.”

Naturally something like sailing ships, driven by winds, &c. (*Picture out.*) Not much good saying that such a ship must not *conform* to the forces

which move it. If not to conform it must be *transformed* by being turned into a steam ship, having its inside *renewed*. So with us. *Naturally* can't help taking tone from others, but God is greater than our nature and can put a new power in us—"renew our minds" (*cf.* Ps. li. 10-12).

APPLY.

Way to heaven like voyage across rough sea. Never get there if let waves drive us; only by power of Holy Spirit carrying us on in spite of winds and waves. Let us ask Him to transform us by renewing *our* minds.

IX.—COPYING OUR FATHER.

"Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: . . . But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: . . . For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."—EXODUS xx. 9, and parts of 10, 11.

Children like to imitate parents. Father joiner; boy gets hold of saw and hammer—must do some carpentering. Mother cutting out dress; girl gets scissors—must cut out too. God, our Father, wants us to imitate Him.

I. LET US WORK AS GOD WORKED.

1. One thing at a time.

Never was such a tangle to put straight as that in Gen. i.—"Without form and void." Yet God did it. How? First light, then firmament, then land, then grass, beasts, men.

How often we make mistakes through rushing at half a dozen things at once. Lessons, tidying up, tangles generally. Copy your Father. "One at a time."

So also in religion; try to conquer one fault at a time.

2. The right thing first, or everything in its proper place.

God did not make man before there was a place for him or food for him. Everything was in the *right* place. Beasts ready for man, and green herbs for beasts, and land for herbs, and light for all.

Copy your Father again. Often just the other way. Boy wants to be a man before he has been a boy. To write in copy-book before can write properly on slate, &c.

So also in religion. *First* our hearts—out of these are “the *issues of life*.”

II. LET US REST AS GOD RESTED.

“Why keep Sunday?” Best answer, “Because our Father did, and He wants us to copy Him.” Question something like baby’s, “Why go to bed just yet?” need not give any other reason than that father wants him to.

But *other* children, too—wants them to copy Him as well. How selfish to buy things on Sunday. “Ah, but *I* rested.” If you pushed another boy through a window, who would have to pay for the broken glass?

Remember, then, our Father’s work and our Father’s rest. Recapitulate. Let us try to copy Him. He will help us if we try. Pray, “Lord, show us how to work now, so that afterwards we may rest with Thee for ever.”

In working up this address, help may be found from *Draper’s Lessons on the Ecclesiastical Year*, No. XV., by which, in part, it was suggested.

X.—THE RACE OF LIFE.

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—PHIL. iii. 14.

[INTRODUCTORY REMARK.—There is a question as to what St. Paul means by “pressing towards the mark.” The writer inclines to the opinion that the *mark* is not the goal, but the boundary line which *marks* out the course. A trained runner would naturally press towards this in order to economise his exertions. Many good critics, however, take the other view; and, in any case, the point is one which need not interfere with the heads here given.]

If we want to do anything well, two things are *necessary*, and a third is *valuable*. We must have *an aim*. We must be in earnest in endeavouring to secure that aim—and if its attainment will ensure a prize, *that* will encourage us to greater effort. St. Paul, in the text, speaks of these things. Let us consider—

I. THE AIM.

1. To do *anything* well we must have an aim; *e.g.*, *writing*—to write like the copy; boy who only tries to fill the page quickly will never write well. So

also *learning lessons*—must aim at learning them *without a mistake*, otherwise shall be slovenly scholars, quick, perhaps, but not *accurate*. Even in games the same is true—you will never play well at marbles unless you learn how to aim. [Three boys in Canada tried which could make the straightest track across a snow-field. Only one went straight. He fixed his eye on a fixed point, and so succeeded when the others failed.]

2. To *live well* we must have an aim. Many aims which people do have. Some *money*, some *fame*, some *happiness*. [Three boys at school together—one heavy but plodding, resolved to be *great*; the second, quick and lively, to be *rich*; the third, pale and delicate, to lead a quiet, useful life. The first became Lord Chancellor; the second went to India and made a fortune; the third was William Cowper the poet, whose hymns we still sing.]

3. The best aim.

That which helps us longest. [Not enough to fix on a point half way across a field. What then?] Life goes on beyond the grave; any point this side of the grave will only help us part of the way. St. Paul's aim, the resurrection, to be like Christ. Is not that the *best aim*? Shall we not live best if we make Christ's life our "*copy*," and try to imitate it more closely every day we live?

II. THE ENDEAVOUR.

Not enough to have aim—must do all we can to gain it. [*Cf.* runner; how patiently he *trains* for the race; how careful to put off everything that may

hinder him in running; how eager to do the very best he can do. *Cf.* context and Heb. xii. 1, 2.] A great many would like to write well, be good scholars, &c., but they don't "take pains." Like Reuben (Gen. xlix. 4). Hard work—slow and sure. "The race is not to the *swift*," but it generally *is* to the *patient*. [Hare and tortoise.] Cannot do anything well at once. Must always be going on unto perfection. [Gourds and toadstools grow up in a night. The oak takes centuries.]

[This head may be illustrated by such cases as that of Mr. D'Israeli: "You won't hear me *now*, but one day you *shall* hear me." Palissy the potter, &c.]

If our aim be to copy Christ, the same is true. If you say, "I can't take the trouble," "I never shall be good," "It is quite impossible to become like Christ," and so give over trying, then of course you cannot succeed. See what St. Paul says Phil. iv. 13, and again 2 Cor. ii. 16; answered iii. 5.

III. THE PRIZE.

Get prizes at school for doing well. Thinking of them encourages us to do better—*e.g.*, copying the copy makes you write well, thinking about the writing prize makes it more pleasant to copy the copy.

So in *living*. When it seems hard to copy our Lord, if we think of the prize it may make us more earnest. What prize? *Cf.* context and 1 Pet. i. 4. What a grand prize to win! How sad to lose it through sinful sloth and laziness!

XI.—WORK.

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."—COL. iii. 23.

[In this and the next verse we may put the word "Master" for "Lord" throughout. Ending with, "Ye serve Christ for a master."]

All have to work; some with hands, some with head, &c. Even in Paradise Adam had to work (Gen. ii. 15). Though afterwards, through sin, work turned to labour (iii. 19). Think of—

I. THE WAY TO WORK.

1. Many different ways in which men *do* work.

Loitering (describe and illustrate). *Procrastinating*, "to-morrow"—motto on Mr. Ruskin's seal, "To-day. To-day. To-day." *Impulsively*, spasms of industry, &c.

2. The right way.

"Heartily," with the heart in it.

[*Cf.* difference between a squirt and a fountain—one jerks out water and soon stops, the other sends it up in a steady, constant stream.]

II. THE MOTIVE FOR WORKING.

1. Many different motives.

To *please others* (illustrate); to *get prizes*, money, &c.; to *keep oneself comfortable*; to *escape punishment*.

2. The right motive.

“As unto the Lord.”

[World like great workshop; picture out—many wheels, many workers, many overseers, *one* master over all. If *he* approves our work, doesn’t matter what *others* say—our fortune is made.]

III. THE KIND OF WORK.

“Whatsoever ye do.”

1. Some would say, “*Religious* work—prayer—church-going—reading Bible, &c.; should be done, heartily.” Quite true, it should be—let us try to do it so more and more—hearty *prayers—services* (Amens like sea beating on shore in St. Chrysostom’s time)—*meetings*, &c., but—

2. Text goes further—“*whatsoever*,” i.e., *all* work.

St. Paul wrote this for *slaves*—what *they* had to do—much more should *we* put our hearts into everything (cleaning, cooking, learning lessons, sewing, &c.). Whoever gives the work, he is *God’s agent*—God is the master you should do it for. G. Herbert says of the words, “For Thy sake”—

“A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
 Makes that and the action fine.”

A cobbler managed to do it—said, “When I take a stitch it *is* a stitch, and when I put on a heeltap it is not paper, but good leather.”

So, too, with what we call *little* things—*whatsoever* covers everything. Recapitulate and conclude.

XII. LOVE.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."—
I JOHN iv. 7.

John.—"The disciple whom Jesus loved." His old age—used to be carried into church—no sermon—only one message, "Little children, love one another."

I. WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. *Cf.*
iii. 18.

Contrast with *false* love "in word and tongue."

True love is in *deed*, and in truth.

Cf. Judas who kissed, and John who loved.

May illustrate by story of King Lear.

II. WHY WE OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

i. Should copy our Father, and "God is Love."

Can you remember where to find that text? Very easy. Comes *twice* in John's *first* Epistle, both times in *fourth* chapter, once in *eighth*, and once in *sixteenth* verse. Can't forget it if you know your *two* tables.

Twice one is two,
Twice two is four,
Twice four is eight,
Twice eight is sixteen.

2. We are brothers.
3. God so loved us.

Enlarge and illustrate.

III. HOW WE MAY LEARN TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

So hard to love some people! Can't pump up love all at once. How make dry pump draw? Pour water down it. So begin by doing little loving actions—then love begins to come,—or—creeping plant may cover house, but begins on a stick.

Try to think loving thoughts—that will lead to kind acts, and so on more and more.

Ask God to help.

IV. RESULTS.

1. Heaven on earth. *Cf.* text, "Knoweth God," and God is in heaven—so know heaven, and have the joy of heaven.

2. Those who love are loved.

3. Make us alive—*really* alive.—I John iii. 14.

[Frozen traveller—finds another more frozen—pities him—tries to warm him—so saves his own life too.] [Story of Abou Ben Adhem in Leigh Hunt's Poems.]

Let us try this week—children fond of new games. See how many kind things you can do each day—add them up—see which can do most. So may help one another, and learn how to be more like God.

XIII.—THE ALCHEMIST'S SECRET.

"The greatest of these is charity."—1 COR. xiii. 13.

Three hundred years ago might have seen some venerable-looking old man—people called him an alchemist—followed him home, would have found room full of bottles and glass vessels, with furnaces and other strange things. What could he use them for? Trying to find something which would turn other things to gold. If he had found it? Very rich—but what use? Very old and must soon die. So used to try and find something else as well which would make him live when he got rich. He was seeking for something which would give him *riches and life*.

Would you like to discover this great secret? You may—it will give you better riches and a better life than any he aimed at. "Treasure in heaven," and "eternal life" to enjoy the treasure. What is the secret? *Love*.

I. LOVE TURNS EVERYTHING INTO TREASURE.

What is *treasure*? Not merely riches, but riches which we can *keep*. [King's treasure, not the money

he spends, but the jewels and valuables which he does not spend.]

1. Things we like.

Suppose you have money—don't mean to keep it—spend it—what you buy only lasts for a little—wears out—goes somehow, more or less quickly.

Suppose instead, see some poor person—very hungry—"I am a little Christian—Jesus would have helped—wants me to help. There, take this." "Gone?" No. Gone *up*. Treasure in heaven. Only remember may give from wrong motives—to get praise, or because giving is pleasant—in such case you have bought praise or pleasure with your money. Only *love* can turn it into treasure:—"I do want to love Jesus, and He wants me to do this." One of these days find the treasure waiting for you. [Picture out—Jesus come again—we all before Him. Matt. xxv. 40.]

2. Things we don't like.

Troubles. Our Lord turned His troubles into treasure. Isa. liii. 10, 11; Heb. xii. 2.

So did St. Paul. 2 Cor. xii. 8–10, *cf.* Rom. v. 3–5.

Enemies. Love turns them into friends. [Alexander the Great was asked, how so young he could do so much. "I use my enemies so well that I compel them to be friends, and I treat my friends so well that I never lose their friendship."]

Difficulties. Boy at school—can't learn lessons. Younger brother comes—elder brother helps him—obliged to learn himself—finds his own work easier. *Love* has made it grow easy.

One of these days when we get to heaven and

come to look over our treasury—what a heap of strange things! All *treasures* then—but *love* has made them treasures.

II. LOVE GIVES LIFE.

1 John iii. 13, 14.

Death can't get in where there is love.

[Fire on prairies—all grass burnt up—one green spot left. Why? Little spring there; fire could not destroy because spring never failed. So 1 Cor. xiii. 8. *Charity, i.e. love, never faileth.*]

III. HOW MAY WE GET LOVE?

Some say, “I can't love. Some things I never shall like. So selfish; never can be like Jesus Christ; always going about doing good—always thinking how I can help others.”

Yes, you can.

1. Do little kind acts, then love will grow.

2. Ask God. He will give you this *gift* (Jas. i. 17). The “most excellent gift.” “The love of God”—the love like God's love—“is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is *given* unto us” (Rom. v. 5).

XIV.—“WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.”

PHIL. ii. 12, 13.

Two things to learn—*what* we have to do; and *how* we have to do it. *Cf.* text—“Work out,” &c. ; “For it is God,” &c. So our Church in catechism “Renounce the devil,” &c.; “Made the child of God,” &c. Let us take catechism as commentary on St. Paul and see—

I. OUR DUTY. (Responsibility.)

Illustr.—Man going to some place due south, and on way summoned to some other place due north. What do? (1) Give up the way he is going. (2) Find out the way he has to go. (3) Travel by the new way. *Cf.* ourselves. Going *our own way*, then God summons us to go *His way*. So—

1. *Repentance.* Renouncing—giving up our own way. “Hard;” yes, but must be done; can’t travel by two ways at the same time. May *go* one way and *dream* about going the other; but you get to the place you go to, not to the one you dream about going to. Always hard in this world, but will get easier, like other things, with *practice*. Even *Peter* learnt how to do it (*cf.* John xxi. 18). Our Lord

Himself had to learn the lesson (Luke xxii. 42). Even *He* did not find it easy ; what pains *we* should take to learn and practise it.

2. *Faith.* Believing—learning about the *new way*—God's way. [Illustr.: *In travelling—a railway book—how we use it.*] Our Guide Book, or, in short, as catechism puts it, “The Articles of the Christian Faith.” No good giving up our own way if we don't know what other way to go ; must be diligent in learning, and equally diligent in remembering.

3. *Holiness.* “Keeping God's Holy Will,” &c. Having learnt the way, we must go along it. When we *know*, then *obey*. One has gone before us, a Guide whom we may follow (1 Peter ii. 21).

Working out our own salvation not an easy matter—hard—requires *painstaking*. Yet very important. If we fail, what then ? Does not St. Paul say well “with fear and trembling ?”

II. OUR HELP. (Sufficiency.)

Need two things—*will* and *power*.

1. *How God works the will.*

[Illustr.: *Horse anxious to get home ; rest, food, all that a horse likes.*] So God puts before us an aim, gives us a motive. Makes us His children and heirs of His kingdom. Suppose hear of a beautiful country on far side of wide desert, place there for you where always happy. How feel ?—“I should *like* to get there.” This *liking*, wishing, willing, the first thing ; so God works in us the will (cf. 1 Peter i. 3, 4).

2. *How God works the deed.*

Grace given—i.e., power to do what we have to

do. Baptism "made," &c. How the Holy Spirit comes and abides, if we will have Him; always ready to help. [Can't get to York, perhaps, on foot, but can get into train and then the steam power will get you there. So yield to power of Holy Spirit, and *then* He will help you homewards.]

So then a hard thing to do, enough to make us tremble; but a great help to do it; enough to make us confident. Are *we* taking pains, making progress? If not, whose the fault?

XV.—“I AM HOLY.”

“Preserve my soul ; for I am holy.”—Ps. lxxxvi. 2.

I. THE MEANING.

“What presumption !” But “Holy” has two meanings :

1. It means “*very good.*”

So *God* is Holy. *Jesus* is Holy (Acts iv. 27). The *angels* are Holy. [Clergyman once asked little Irish boy, “What does Holy mean ?” “Please, your reverence, to be clane inside.”] But—

2. It means *consecrated, set apart.*

[Illustrate : The Church is a *holy* building ; the churchyard, a *holy* place ; Sunday, a *holy* day. In each case explain why. So men may be set apart—priests in the Temple—clergymen, &c.] If David wrote this psalm, then a good reason for saying he was holy. Picture out his consecration from 1 Sam. xvi.

In this second meaning, not *presumption* but *faith* to say, “I am holy.” [If sheep could speak, might say to shepherd, “I have your mark upon me, therefore take care of me.”]

II. THE APPLICATION.

We are not very good—could not ask God to save

us, because in this sense we are *Holy*; but in the other sense:

1. Our consecration. [Picture out a baptism—small baby. What is done to it? What said? “Christ’s faithful soldier and servant.” So set apart—has the mark put on it—made *Holy*.]

2. Remember you have been set apart—you have got the Good Shepherd’s *mark* on you. Therefore you may ask for help and say, “Preserve me; for I am *holy*.”

(i.) Sometimes in trouble—*cf.* Psalmist—the great helper. But *why* should He help me? I am *Holy*—marked with His mark—therefore He must help if I ask Him.

(ii.) When tempted—hard to resist temptation—but “not our own”—belong to some one else—ask Him.

One of these days, if we trust Him to whose service we have been set apart, He will bring us through all dangers and temptations safe to live in His own home. Then we shall indeed be *Holy* in the very best and most perfect sense.

XVI.—OVERCOMING.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."—Rev. iii. 21.

Letters to the seven churches are from Jesus Christ, written down by John. This one to the Laodiceans. They seem to have been lukewarm—not in earnest—still Christ knocking at the door of their hearts, ready to come in and help them overcome. Speaks to us also to the same purport. Think—

I. WHAT WE HAVE TO OVERCOME.

All soldiers—boys and girls alike—God's armies admit amazons—*cf.* Baptismal Service. [Illustr. : Soldiers being enlisted.] What duty? "Manfully to fight under" Christ's "banner, against—?"

1. *Sin.*

Specially perhaps what is called elsewhere "the flesh," *e.g.*, bad passions (anger, sulkiness, &c.), slothfulness, lying, &c., above all, selfishness, which is at the root of all. *Illustrate* from those who have overcome, *e.g.*, Daniel.

2. *The world.*

Fear of what others will think or say. [Picture out from story of St. Peter's denial of his Master.]

3. *The devil.*

A real enemy—allowed to tempt us [*cf.* Job], often working through others [Matt. xvi. 23], against whom we must fight hard.

II. HOW WE MAY HOPE TO OVERCOME.

As David did (1 Sam. xvii. 46, 47). “The battle is the Lord’s.” Cannot of ourselves—may try and try and try, but, like a boy struggling with a giant, too weak, must fail. What do? Call in some one strong enough to help. Read in this book of some who overcame (describe Rev. xii. 11). How? He has shown that He is stronger than all our foes, for—

1. He fought with sin, yet died sinless.

2. He fought the world, and the world could not make Him do as it wished.

3. He fought the devil, and which gained the victory? [*cf.* Temptation, &c.] This strong helper, our friend. What do if we want His help? So at last not only conquerors, but, as St. Paul says, “more than conquerors.”

III. THE REWARD TO HIM WHO OVERCOMES.

[See text, and refer to conclusions to other epistles.]

If you could get into the Garden of Eden, what would you like to bring away with you? (*cf.* ii. 7). What came of Adam’s eating of the other tree? They who overcome escape something worse (*cf.* ii. 11). [May refer in like manner to the other promises.] Add all up, and what will it come to?

He that overcomes will gain all and more than all that any one can care or long for.

Conclusion.—“ But the victory not ours, but His who helps us.” Yes, but *ours* because *we* are His. If only we will let Him help us, His soldiers need never fear. He shares with us His strength now, that we may share with Him His glory afterwards.

XVII.—THE GOOD FIGHT.

“Fight the good fight of faith.”—*1 Tim. vi. 12.*

Introduction.—Describe the Olympic games (See Dictionary of Antiquities)—once every four years, running, wrestling, boxing, &c.—only Greeks, free-men, allowed to compete, after ten months' strict training and thirty days of special exercises before the festival. Competitors decided by lot. Herald proclaims their name and country. Judges exhort them, “Acquit yourselves nobly.” For victor, a crown of wild olive. Name of father and country proclaimed. Palm branches. Triumphal procession home. A special entrance made for him to his city through a breach in the city walls. All the people celebrating his praise. [Picture out the whole thing as though you had been present and an eye-witness:—“If you had been in Greece 2000 years ago, this is what you might have seen,” &c.]

St. Paul says our life is like this noble contest—a struggle for a crown. He himself had fought and would soon now finish the fight [*cf. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.*]. He would have his friends fight well also. See—

i. THE STRUGGLE.

In the Greek games one of the events was called

the pentathlon or five-fold struggle ; the competitor had to prove his prowess in *leaping, running, quoit-throwing, hurling the javelin, and wrestling*. So too our fight seems to be made up of many, one foe after another to be met and overcome [*cf. wave after wave to be faced by swimmer*]. Sometimes, like racing, trying to get on, to live better, more like our Lord. Sometimes, like wrestling, some temptation writhing itself about one, "should like to yield," "must not yield," very hard to overcome. And, if we could only see, what crowds are looking on ! How interested ! Angels, friends, God the Judge [*cf. Heb. xii. 1*], all full of sympathy, wishing us success. Evil conquered, causes joy in heaven. Sin permitted will make angels sad.

II. THE STRENGTH.

How hope to fight ? Faith our strength [*cf. Heb. xii. 2*]. Looking off unto Jesus, the Author and the Perfecter of faith, we gain from Him the strength we need [*Heb. iv. 16*]. To know that we have strength, if we will but use it, is a first step towards success ; and to use it we must be alert and ready, always on the watch, always prayerful. To fight well needs *training* [*cf. the training for the games*]. Self-indulgent, lazy people cannot hope to overcome. Our Lord says we must do as He did, and we know how He fought and conquered. [*Illustrate.*] "Deny self, take up our cross, follow Him." And all our fighting is itself a training ; each victory prepares us for another. Only they who conquer in little things (*e.g., little faults ; temper, greediness, selfishness in*

some slight form), can ever hope to conquer in greater things. What was St. Paul's first victory? It may have been only, as a little boy, holding his tongue when he was angry; the first conquest, whatever it was, prepared the way for all others.

III. THE PRIZE.

St. Paul calls it elsewhere "the crown of righteousness." It is the glory of winning God's approval. The crown of the Greek victor was but of leaves, soon dry and withered; and though the glory of his deeds was less perishable, yet how little is it remembered now! Our crown will be like that which St. Peter speaks of (1 Peter v. 4), one which cannot fade away. Do you want to know what it is made of? Of the knowledge of good deeds well done, the reflection of the smile of Jesus, the glory of the love of God.

Conclusion.—Let us fear lest we lose this prize. We *may* shirk the fight—how many do! Not really happier—not half so happy, but they shrink from self-denial and cross-bearing. What will be their regret afterwards when they have to meet Christ with shame. [*Cf.* Rich man in Hades, "Son, Remember."] See the message Jesus sent to those who had but a little strength [Rev. iii. 8, 11], "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

[*Note.*—A similar address may also be given from Heb. xii. 1, only, in such case, it will be well to make more of "the crowd of witnesses." Illustrations may be drawn from a cricket or football match, or from school and other athletic sports.]

XVIII.—EASTER GLADNESS.

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.”—*1 COR. xv. 20.*

Joyful day—most joyful in the whole year—so joyful that its joy is reflected in one day (which day?) every week. Well may we have as one of the Psalms for the day Ps. cxviii. Verse 24 seems almost as though it must have been written to describe it.

What makes the day so glad? That first Easter morning how sorrowful all seemed. The dead Master. The hopeless friends. The grave. The great stone. And yet by the evening what a difference. “He is Risen. He is Risen. He is Risen.” Consider—

I. THE RESURRECTION. (What made *the disciples* glad?)

Picture out from the Gospel narrative. The best way is perhaps to begin (catechetically?) with what happened on Good Friday, bringing out the fact that our Lord was actually *dead* when they buried Him (of course the children *know* it, but the object should be to make them *realise* it.) Touch upon the burial; be clear as to the character of the tomb—describe the closing, sealing, guarding of it. Then picture

Mary and others, in the deep dawn before the sun-rising, making for the garden. "Who shall roll us away the stone?" Nearer yet—near enough to make out the entrance to the tomb. What has happened?

What had happened? Describe from St. Matthew's account. The earthquake. The angels. The terror of the sentinels. None saw Him rise, yet He was risen.

Other events on the same day which made the disciples certain that their Lord was really alive again. Appearance to Mary—the two travellers—the eleven. Well may such a day have been a glad day!

II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE RESURRECTION. (What makes *us* glad?)

Who was this Lord who died and rose again? Our Master as well as Peter's and the rest. What He did, done for us just as much as for them. See—

1. *As to the PAST.*

What a sad thing *death* is. Yet something still more sad (Rom. v. 12). What did God say about sin? "The soul that sinneth it shall die." All sinned, all shut out from life; and death, the death we know by seeing it, like a sealed stone shutting in man's sepulchre. Jesus conquered death, so showed that He had conquered sin. We believe that our sins are pardoned, because Jesus, who died for them, is risen again.

2. *As to the PRESENT.*

Even though sins *are* forgiven, we so weak; quite

unable to resist temptation ; soon sin again. [Illust. : *Small child knocked down by enemy, pleasant to have clothes brushed and be made clean and tidy ; but what if next time he goes out of doors his enemy is in wait to knock him down again !*] But Jesus lives. We have a strong friend—a *living* Saviour. We have confidence because, though He died, He has risen again.

3. *As to the FUTURE.*

[Picture from Lev. xxiii. 9-11, what the priest was doing on morning of Easter Day. Offering of the first-fruits a sign and pledge of the future harvest.] Christ, says St. Paul, has become the first-fruits of another harvest—the harvest of the dead. He *is* risen, then all *shall* rise. What a glorious harvest will that be ! May well make us glad to think of it.

Conclusion.—Is Easter Day a glad day for you ? If not, why not ? If so, why ? The best and truest Easter joy is that which rejoices in Christ's resurrection, finding in it pardon for the past, help in the present, hope for the future.

XIX.—SEEDS.

“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.”—
MARK iv. 26, 27.

Christ in boat—bright spring day—fields by lake’s side—picture out. Took His text from plants, sowers, &c. *Our* text part of *His* sermon.

I. HIS TEXT—SEEDS.

Walk through garden early in year—everything coming up—“Spring” (springing time). Why?

1. There was seed sown.
2. There has been moisture to water the seed—rain, dew, &c.
3. The sun’s warmth. If in hot-house, still warmth came from the sun first—coal heats fire, and coal is preserved sunshine.

II. SEED SOWN IN US.

Each of us is a garden—seed sown—teaching—Bible—sermons. I am sowing now, or trying to sow. Plenty been sown in time past. *Is it coming up?* Has it made us do anything?—more obedient?—helpful? [Illust.]

What makes it come up?

1. Holy Spirit—moisture to plant (John vii. 38, 39; Hos. xiv. 5).
2. Love of our Lord Jesus; like sun's warmth. See what St. Paul says (2. Cor. v. 14), "constraineth us."

III. OURSELVES AS SEEDS.

Walk in another garden, just by church—ever seen them sowing seeds there? Yes, seeds our bodies (1. Cor. xv. 42). They too *must* all come up. How? *As weeds or plants?* For God's beautiful garden, or to be cast out?

If want to be among the good *plants*, then must take care now that we are good *gardens*. The way we treat the seed sown in us, makes us as seeds, good or bad.

XX.—THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.”—JOHN xvi. 7.

INTRODUCTION. Suppose hard times—no work, no wages, no food. Father thinks he had better go elsewhere—get work—send home wages—the mother and the children very sorry to lose him, yet ‘expedient for them’ that he should go away.

Our Lord’s disciples, though perhaps they did not know it, needed more food for their spirits than even Jesus, their Master, could give them—He must go away and send them what they needed. See—

I. THE GIFT PROMISED.

Picture out scene—upper room—supper—disciples reclining round tables—Master at the head—what He did and said. He must go away, even for their sake, to gain and send the gift they were in want of. Fancy their sorrow—(like children saying good-bye to father).

What happened afterwards? Gethsemane—Calvary—then the Resurrection—and, at last, went away to Heaven from Bethany. What will they do? Wait in Jerusalem until the promise is fulfilled.

II. THE GIFT EXPECTED.

[Picture family—father gone—watching for

post-man or carrier—"Perhaps he will send to-day." Careful not to go away lest letter or message should not reach them]. *Cf.* with disciples—Upper room again—waiting day after day. "When will the gift come?"

III. ARRIVAL OF THE GIFT.

Ten days—then, early one morning, great hurricane—sound like thunder—people outside think house has been struck—run to see what mischief. Inside, like ball of fire,—tongues of flame splitting off from it, and hovering over each head—strange voices, &c. (see Acts ii.). The Gift had come.

IV. WHAT THE GIFT DID.

[Suppose father very fortunate—sends P. O. O. for several pounds. How eager to cash it—buy food—pay rent, &c.] Here food for their spirits, and the men who received it eager to try what it would do. They had been cowardly [*illustrate*], now *bold*; unlearned, now *wise*, &c. [*illustrate* from narrative].

Conclusion. Gift not for apostles only but for all others. [*Cf.* Fortune in bank for some family—each member a share.] We too, as Christians, members of the same family, a right to claim our special share. It will help us to do anything if only we take pains and are willing to use it—only we must *use* it. [Money in bank no use if not drawn upon.] God "gives His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him;" no need then for any to say "I can't," when God says "You ought."

Note.—A good deal of the interest of this lesson must depend upon the way in which the scripture scenes are pictured.

XXI.—A SERMON FROM THE ORGAN.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”—JOHN xvii. 20, 21.

Scene in the upper room — picture out — Our Lord’s prayer—what about?—“all may be one”—“all” who? Those who did believe, and those who should believe.

Why talk of this now? Because organ going to preach, and can say a good deal about this text. Let me tell you the organ’s sermon, so far as I have heard it.

I. Once no organ here. Then packing-cases—unpacked—what they contained—all kinds of pipes, &c., long, short, some wood, some metal—all confusion—what did organ say then?

“All these pipes, &c., parts of me—all got to find their place—all to be made one.” So God building an instrument—His Son’s Church—all manner of people [*illustrate*]—great confusion, but all going to be “made one.” What Jesus prayed for. What is being done now?

II. Time went on—pipes sorted out—if *we* had had to do with them, might have tried to fit into case—so made all one. What does organ say?

“All belong to one case—can all be fitted in—that won’t make all one—soon find how different when try to play.” So Christ’s Church—all baptized people belong to it—all Christians so far *one*; but that not sense Jesus thought most important. *Christians* may quarrel—want one *music*, one *case* not enough.

III. That not the way organ *was* put together. As pipes put in, tuned, all to one key, dreadful noises. If pipes could have felt, very unpleasant. Some cut down, some beaten out. People might have said, “No *music* ever *can* come out of that!”

So Church *now* being built up, and being *tuned* at the same time—all to one pitch—God’s will—our wills being “conformed” to His. Hard work for pipes, yet all working together for good. Strange notes sometimes, but only that better may come after. All in tune, when all say from heart, “Thy will be done.”

IV. Now that organ is all finished, what does it say?

1. “One day Church like me, all in tune—all one.” World see it and know that Jesus is true. Beautiful music then. John heard it (Rev. vii. 9-12). Christ’s prayer fulfilled. “Will *you* be part of *that* instrument?”

2. “Remember it is not I who have the praise.

I did not build myself. Now that I am built, played *through* by wind, played *on* by player. So music comes." Just so with you, if part of Christ's Church. Nothing apart from Christ. Holy Spirit breathes through you, as God the Father wills. So comes the beautiful music, which God loves and the world will listen to.

XXII.—THE WORSHIP OF HEAVEN.

"A door was opened in heaven."—Rev. iv. 1.

Remember in Jewish Temple—square room at the end—curtains in front—ark inside, with mercy-seat, &c. Only one person ever went in, the High Priest, once a year. Jews used to think heaven was like that room. Blue sky, like a curtain which they could not see through—supposed, behind it, God's throne—something like ark in Temple.

One Sunday—perhaps Easter—a Jew all alone in a desert island—looking out across sea, thinking [can picture out from chap. i.]. After this (iv. 1) looked, and there, in sky, something he had never seen before, the sky curtain drawn back, so that he could look inside—voice telling him to come up—made able to hear as well as see.

I. WHAT ST. JOHN SAW AND HEARD.

1. Picture out—there was the throne just as he would have expected, and "One" on it [*cf.* a bank of clouds in the west at sunset, with the sun just resting over them]; rainbow "round" [*we* only see half rainbows]; four creatures [*cf.* cherubim over mercy-seat]; seven lamps [*cf.* golden candlesticks,

just outside holy place]; sea of glass [*cf. Laver*]; a circle of men seated, clothed in white, with crowns of gold. Lightnings, thunderings, voices out of throne [*cf. the glory of the Lord shining out upon the mercy seat*].

2. Describe what the four creatures said, and the consequent action and psalm of the twenty-four elders.

[*N.B.*—A great deal of the interest of this address as sketched must depend upon the picturing. The picture must first be clearly imagined. There should then be no great difficulty in describing it.]

II. WHAT THE VISION HAS TO DO WITH US.

We pray, “Thy will, &c., as it is *in heaven*.” Think, then, how God’s will is done in heaven:—

1. *All have one thing to think about.*

Sometimes we get a thought into our heads and can’t get rid of it, *e.g.*, a new book—holiday—dress. Whatever we are doing we keep thinking about that. One thing many people always seem to be thinking about. *Self*: “What shall *I* do?” “What will people think of *me*?”

In heaven quite different—*one* thought still, but that thought *God*—all “round about the *throne*”—looking towards “*the throne*”—not thinking of themselves, but of how best *God* may be served.

Try, as they do in heaven, to keep God in all your thoughts—not “What should *I* like?” but “What does *God* wish?”

2. *All are doing one thing.*

Thoughts lead on to actions—bad thoughts to bad

actions, *e.g.*, Cain ; good thoughts to good actions. So here all thinking of, looking towards, God—all *worship* Him—

(1.) With their bodies (v. 10). Learn to kneel reverently—stand reverently—at service. That fidgetty boy, that lounging girl, not worshipping as they do in heaven.

(2.) With their voices.

All join—room for imitating them in the responses, amens, hymns, &c.

(3.) With their hearts.

They think what they are saying and mean what they say. This the most important of all, bodies may be too weak to kneel, voices may be silent, but if we worship with our hearts we shall still be true worshippers.

Don't you care about such things? Ask God to give the new heart that you may, now that heaven is open, we, too, may gain light and help from the seven spirits which are before the throne.

XXIII.—THE JOY OF HARVEST.

[FOR HARVEST FESTIVAL.]

“They joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest.”—
ISAIAH ix. 3.

Why glad to-day? Flowers, fruit, decorations. Cf. Jews at their Feast of Tabernacles [Deut. xvi. 13-15; cf. Rev. vii. 9, 10] called “*The Feast of the Jews*” because so much the most joyful. Such joy “the joy of harvest.” See:—

I. WHAT THE JOY IS.

Natural to be glad of a good harvest. Why? Because an *end* is gained for which there has been long waiting, labour, anxiety.

[*Illustr.*: Remember when you started to win that prize! So many marks to be gained, some few each Sunday. You were ill, perhaps, and missed some for attendance. Often you were all but late—it took a good deal of exertion and some self-denial to get you to school in time—then the lessons, &c.; but, little by little, the marks added up, and at last you found you had right number. The prize yours, and you glad—“rejoiced according to the joy of harvest.”]

So with farmer—getting soil ready—ploughing,

then sowing, &c. How often the weather seemed to backen the crops! What care required to watch and guard them! What fears that, in spite of all, some misfortune would prevent the gaining of the prize. Now at last the harvest is come. Natural to be joyful.

II. WHY SHOULD WE REJOICE?

Natural for farmers, but we have not had much anxiety! Why should we be joyful? Well,

1. *From sympathy.*

Cf. St. Paul. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice." Easy and natural to do this. If we don't get a prize ourselves we yet feel some gladness to see some one else glad—anyway we *ought* to! [Sometimes children say, "No prize—won't come to prize-giving." Is not that rather selfish? *They* lose by it too, for joy is joy, whether we rejoice with others or for ourselves. Silly to lose "a good time" by sulking!]

2. *From gratitude.*

If not had the anxiety, yet share the benefit. Food cheaper. Money will go further. Parents better able to get you clothes, &c. A good harvest does us all good, and if we have not had the trouble all the more should we be grateful for an unearned blessing.

III. OTHER JOYS LIKE HARVEST JOYS.

E.g., the harvest of a successful life. It is reached little by little, step by step, no leaping to results. Just like "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn." When it comes, what a satisfaction!

What a reward for patient pains-taking ! Five, ten, fifteen years hence, who of us will be reaping ? —and what ?

And another life beyond this ; other harvests in the world to come—still reached little by little—little acts of kindness—little self-denials, &c. Yet what rejoicing when Christ's true servants rejoice before Him “according to the joy in harvest” [cf. Rev. vii, 10].

Conclusion.—Harvests are not *always* joyful [*Illust.*] The farmer cannot always secure a good harvest. But *we* may, for God will help us ; own fault if our harvest be not glad. Remember, “as a man soweth so shall he also reap” [cf. also Gal. vi. 8]. Now is *our* sowing time : are we sowing good seed or bad ?

XXIV.—A GRAIN OF WHEAT.

“Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”—
JOHN xv. 8.

A grain of wheat, a little thing; what can it say to little people? Notice:—

I. IT MUST LOSE ITSELF BEFORE IT CAN FIND ITSELF.

Describe. A little, hard, oblong thing. Put it away carefully and it will remain just as it is, the same 1000 years hence as now. But put it in the ground—bury it—it begins to swell—breaks up—breaks out—no more a grain but—&c.

So with us. So long as we are wrapped up in self, nothing comes of us—very important to ourselves, very unimportant to most others, and very useless. But when we begin to lose ourselves—to think more of those about us and of things outside ourselves—then we begin to grow—get wiser, better, &c.—learn what we *may* be and begin to *be* it.

II. ITS END IS TO BEAR FRUIT.

Watch it grow—blade—ear—full corn—and then its work done. The full corn is what comes at last from the seed losing itself. [May contrast with other plants, where the nourishment is in the root,

e.g., potatoes. When the Maories, accustomed to bulbs, were introduced to wheat, they dug it up and were disgusted at its fibrous roots.]

And with us—we have to bear fruit:—

1. *Not all at once.* Slowly—in regular order—blade, ear, &c.—boyhood, youth, manhood, but—

2. *At last*—and all that goes before leads up to the “at last”—what we call “formation of character.” What fruit is likely to come from *you*?

III. IF STOPPED FROM BEARING FRUIT IT BECOMES A WEED.

Describe. Cut off the flower when it comes, then a bulb begins to form at the root. A new blade will come up next year from this bulb. Cut off the flower again and continue the process, year by year—in about twelve years your wheat will have degraded into a mere grass, and then, do what you will, you cannot get it to become wheat again.

So, too, with us. If we don’t let the fruit form in us—[Good thoughts, growing into good resolutions, leading on to good actions, forming good habits]—then we become, little by little, less and less able to bear fruit. What must be the end of such a course? (See Matt. xiii. 30 and *cf.* context.) What shall we be—grain bearers for God’s granaries, or tares for the angels to collect and burn?

XXV.—A WATERED GARDEN.

"Thou shalt be like a watered garden."—ISAIAH lviii. 11.

1. WHAT A WATERED GARDEN IS LIKE.

Good amusement for children, "Bible Pictures." Some one draws a picture *in words* out of Bible, the rest guess. Let me draw one now and see if you can guess it.

[A land, pleasant but wild. In all directions things seem left to themselves. Trees, shrubs, grass, all growing wild and untended. In this wilderness a solitary man; he seems to be waiting—wondering how he came there. I look round, and off, in the east, where the sun rose not so long ago, *some one* seems to be at work; space is being cleared, new trees and shrubs planted, order taking the place of confusion. Presently the worker comes to the man out in the wilderness, and leads him to the place which he has planted. As we go with him we see it is a pleasant garden; in it is every tree pleasant to sight and good for food; in all directions it is watered by rivers. Here the man is settled as the gardener; told to dress it, and to keep it.]

There is the picture. Now what garden? Who planted it? Who had to keep it? How was it watered? (Gen. ii. 8-15.) That was the most

beautiful garden that ever was seen ; *planted* by God, well watered, and with Adam as the gardener. The gardener, too, had God to teach him how to do his work—how to train and dress the plants properly, and how to get them well watered.

So then this garden, and the same is true of other flourishing gardens, was *well planted, well watered, and well looked after.*

II. HOW WE MAY BE LIKE WATERED GARDENS.

Our hearts are gardens.

1. *God has planted them.*

What with ? The seeds of graces, love, faith, hope, patience, gentleness, humility. May come up in beautiful flowers and fruits. [May illustrate, by anecdote or otherwise, the character of these flowers and fruits of the Spirit.]

2. *The Holy Spirit is at hand to water them (cf. John. vii. 37-39).*

Like a beautiful river—the river of the Water of Life—proceeding out from under God's throne, and flowing down through the streets of the city of God (Rev. xxii. 1), always ready for use (Rev. xxii. 17).

3. *We are the gardeners who have to look after them.*

God will teach us (see the words before our text); then under His teaching we have—

(1) *To dress.* See that the plants get all the help they want, and are properly watered. Remember graces grow by exercise.

(2) *To keep, i.e., guard, clear off evil thoughts and bad habits, as gardener clears off slugs and snails, and guards against birds who steal the seeds.*

Our best garden-tool is prayer ; that, at any rate, is the handle which fits all tools.

III. IF NOT LIKE WATERED GARDENS, WHAT THEN?

Our hearts, planted by God, Holy Spirit at hand to water God's plants ; if the plants are withering, or the seeds not coming up, whose fault must it be ? Isaiah tells us about something of the kind. [*Picture out from Isa. v. 5, 6.*] Because the gardener would neglect his garden, it had to be made a wilderness again, and not even the rain allowed to water it ! Well to remember what may happen if we are not watchful. How are *you* keeping your garden ? Are God's flowers blowing there, and His fruits ripening as they should do ?

[Any one using this outline is strongly recommended to study it carefully. The writer knows, from painful personal experience, that it is one which may easily be made a hash of.]

XXVI.—LESSONS FROM THE FLOWERS.

“Consider the lilies.”—MATT. vi. 28.

Old text, but cannot have a better. By it Christ says, “Think about the flowers,” and that is just what we want to do.

Think how the flowers come. In a plant you may notice three things: 1. Leaves, commonplace things. 2. Flowers, beautiful things. 3. Fruits or seeds, useful things. Now the flowers, the beautiful things, come in between the commonplace and the useful. *The commonplace, trying to become useful, becomes beautiful.*

[*Explain.* See a shrub, stalks and leaves, some leaves bigger than others, but, in time, all alike must die, and, if the plant continue thus without fruit or seed, it must perish utterly.

What happens? Plant seems to say, “I must have fruit,” and the leaves to reply, “We will help you.” A number of young leaves get together, some unite and twist themselves into a kind of stalk, others, in like manner, form other stalk-like things round this. Yet others combine about these to form a delicate leaf garland, and stronger ones from the outside gather round and clasp the whole together. No one would take them for leaves at all. Together they combine to make a flower! Yes, a flower is really a

number of leaves trying to make the plant they grow on fruitful. If each leaf lived to itself, no fruit could ever form and ripen. By combining, the leaves make fruit possible, and "losing themselves" to make fruit, they achieve, by the way, the composition of a flower!

[*Note*.—This introduction has been carefully worked out and requires mastering for the address to be successful. It is in accordance with the teaching of the best modern botanists, who define a flower as "a local and fleeting part in which or by which the fecundation of the plant is effected." It may be taken as an established fact that all the parts of the flower are composed of modified leaves.]

Our heathen forefathers used to say that mankind was like a great tree—the tree Ygdrasil they called it—men and women, boys and girls were all leaves upon the countless branches. All the leaves very much alike, but when they combine, in order to be useful, nothing can be more beautiful. See what the flowers teach us:—

I. IF WE WANT TO BE BEAUTIFUL WE MUST TRY TO BE USEFUL.

Some people always thinking about themselves—want to be first in everything—don't like to be helped or to help others. [*Illust.* : Story of Narcissus. Greeks used to say he was a beautiful boy, so proud of his own beauty that he would go away, alone, into the woods and look for hours at his own reflection in a lake. Little by little he pined away and at last died by the lake side. Instead of him there sprang up the sickly smelling flower which has since been

called by his name.] The leaves work together to be useful, and so they make a flower amongst them. If any one wants to be himself the flower, he may chance to become like Narcissus. *Cf.* Our Lord's words, "He that will save his life shall lose it."

II. TO BE USEFUL WE MUST CO-OPERATE WITH OTHERS.

One leaf cannot make a flower, but many make it by combining. So grow beautiful without trying to. What about us? [Illust.: That girl or boy, with some new treasure. Thinks what a good time she or he will have, how much thought of and admired. If the treasure be kept for self, the owner will soon be thought ugly and perhaps *be* ugly. Only as we share with others is there much hope of our becoming beautiful.] Work together, like the leaves, try to be useful and to help others, and so, too, like the leaves, we shall gain beauty by the way.

III. AFTER TRYING ALL WE CAN, WE MUST STILL TRUST FOR RESULTS TO GOD.

Even when the flower is made, fruit does not always follow. Winds or insects must fertilise the flower, bring what is needed to make fruit come. So too, doing all we can, we still need the breath of God's fertilising Spirit. He it is who takes our beauty and from it forms the fruit which is of use.

Conclusion.—What happens to the leaves and flowers? And we too must "fade as a leaf." But it will not matter if the wind of death showers the petals when the fruit is set!

XXVII.—THE DAISY.

“As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.”—Ps. ciii. 15.

Flowers may bring *sad* thoughts or *happy* thoughts, and sometimes the sad thoughts change to happy ones as we go on thinking about them. When our Lord said, “Consider the lilies,” He had a happy thought about the flowers. The Psalmist who wrote this Psalm had a sadder thought:—“Flowers soon fade, so man,”—but the sad thought grew bright:—“Though man fade, God cannot fade—His mercy will always be sure to those who trust and fear Him.” We may take another thought from his words—a real flower of the field—what so common as the Daisy! Let us see how men, how children, may be like the Daisy and flourish as the Daisy flourishes.

I. THE NAME.

What does Daisy mean? (Day's eye.) Fields, like the face of a living creature, but not only *two* eyes, full of little twinkling eyes, eyes which open when the day dawns and close at night as the day closes. Day's eyes. What makes the eyes open? Light—sun rises and bright rays shoot out and kiss the little shut lids—they feel the kiss and open out beneath it. When the sun goes down and the light grows dim, the lids shut and the flowers sleep.

I. *An example.*

Remember verse :—

Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

Might add :

And is good, too, for all little creatures with eyes.

When bed-time comes and you want to stay up longer; or getting-up time comes and you want to stay in bed longer—remember Daisy—never wants to keep eyes shut after light shines, or eyes open after sunset.

2. *A parable.*

Not only eyes in our head—eyes in ourselves. [Illust. : When we come to understand a thing, often say, “I see it now.”] What sort of things should we keep these eyes open for? Things which the light shows us. And who is the Light of the world? So, things which Jesus Christ shows us; other things He does not care for us to know. If we want to be like the Daisy, must keep eyes—hearts—open to the Light. Look out for good things. When darkness comes and bad thoughts hover about, shut the eyes—“We are children of the Light and of the day.”

II. THE STRUCTURE.

The Daisy is, really, a whole family or school of little flowers bound up together. Look at yellow middle through a magnifying glass—each little yellow speck, a perfect flower, with five little yellow petals of its own; more than a hundred of these tiny flowers all club together to make *one* flower more beautiful than any of them.

We know proverb “Union is strength” [cf. fable of

sticks and faggots], but also true that "Union is beauty"—perhaps when not "beauty" it may not be "strength" either. [*Cf.* Zech. xi.: "Beauty" got broken first and then "Bands" had to be broken]. If only we could live together as the little yellow Daisy flowerets live—never hear any of them say, "I'll never love you any more"—each in his own place, doing his own duty, happy and contented, at one with all his brothers. Remember what Psalmist says, Ps. cxxxiii., "Behold how good," &c. If we want home to be like Daisy, or school like Daisy, then no quarrelling, jealousy, unkindness, but all "dwelling together in unity."

But the Daisy not all yellow—what else? The little flowers clubbed together can secure *among them* this beautiful bright crown! See what St. Paul says, Eph. iv. 1, 3, "walk worthy bond of peace"; *cf.* Col. iii. 14, "above all bond of perfectness" (*i.e.*, "perfect belt" or "girdle"). If like the Daisy flowerets we love one another, like them we have a beautiful girdle—the perfect girdle or bond of peace.

III. SOURCE OF HEALTH.

What makes the Daisy grow? What keeps all the little flowerets united, and the beautiful white crown-belt unbroken? The light and the air from above, the rains which cleanse it, and refresh it through the roots. So too we want, God's *Light*, God's *Spirit* (like wind), and all the other refreshing influences by which God tries to make us pure; we can only "flourish" as this "flower of the field" through the "mercy of the Lord, which endureth for ever."

XXVIII.—THE PRIMROSE.

“I love them that love me ; and those that seek me early shall find me.”—PROV. viii. 17.

Talk to-day about the Primrose, a flower we all know by sight, at any rate. What has it got to teach us ?

I. THE NAME.

Sounds like “first rose”—but we can see the flower is not much like a rose. Name, like other names, got changed by much saying over—real name even prettier, “Primerol,” *i.e.* “Little Firstling.” The first, or almost the first, spring flower—a beautiful flower, picture of wisdom—*may* be found later on, but “Those that seek me early *shall* find me.”

And in other ways, too, it may remind us of wisdom—see :—

II. THE NATURE OF THE FLOWER.

(1.) *It has always honey for Bees.*

You know what the flower is like—salver shaped with a tube in the middle. Down at the bottom of the tube there is honey, and the Bee comes with his long “*proboscis*”—like an elephant’s trunk—and pushes down to the honey and so gets it. The

beautiful pale yellow flower is an advertisement, "Come to me," it says, "and I will give you honey."

So, too, wisdom, for those who find it, a regular honey-bag (*cf.* Prov. xxiv. 13, 14). But who can find it? Those who are like *the Bees*—steady, diligent, persevering—not thinking only of sweets for themselves, but how to store up for themselves and others.

2. *It does not give up its honey for nothing.*

Two kinds of Primrose—one plant all the flowers of one kind, another plant all the flowers of the other kind. One kind of flower has the pollen at the top of the tube, the other half-way down—and the pollen has to be taken from flower to flower, for each wants that which is produced by the other. If the pollen is at the top of the tube the little stem which wants pollen from elsewhere is half-way down; and if the pollen is half-way down, the little stem strikes up to the top. Now what happens when the Bee comes? He pokes his long nose down the tube after the honey—if the pollen is at the top, his cheeks get smeared—if half-way down, he smears the tip of his nose. Then he goes off to the other kind of flower and wipes off the pollen. If it is on his cheeks he gives it to the little stem that strikes up to the top of the tube—if on his nose to the little stem half-way down—and still he gets more honey from each of them. So the Bee is always kept employed—he has to fetch and carry between flower and flower—the honey is really the Bee's *wages*, his payment for being the flower's postman.

So, too, with wisdom—the pleasure of wisdom, like honey, our wages. The man who gets wisdom is always being made useful, even without intending

it [*cf.* Joseph in Egypt]. If you want to be useful in the best way, seek wisdom—enjoy the sweets of it—and you will be useful; perhaps without knowing it.

III. THE FINDING OF THE FLOWER.

How does the Bee set about finding the Primrose? He knows it when he sees it and the smell helps to direct him, but how does he get within sight and smell of it? “Flies.” How? “Wings.” And what do the wings work on? [Like *oars*, but oars want water.] Yes—the air, the breeze, the wind. Trust to this *first of all*, so brought within reach of the sweetness and the useful work.

So, too, again, with wisdom. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Trust in Him, and obedience to Him put us in the way of getting wisdom. Just as the Bee “commits its way” unto the wind, so should we “commit our way” unto the guidance of God’s Spirit. (*Cf.* Ps. xxxvii. 4, 5).

XXIX.—THE BLUE-BELL (HYACINTH).

“A good name is better than precious ointment.”—Eccl. vii. 1.

Blue-bell a good name—matches the flower—we like the flower and so we like the name. Why do we like the flower?

I. NOT BECAUSE OF THE NAME.

Blue, *i.e.*, really, the colour made by a *blow*—and *Bell*, much the same as *bellow*, the noise a beast makes when you give him a blow. So the name, by itself, may mean no more than “Cry out when you’re hurt,” very sensible advice, but as commonplace as sensible. The flower makes the name good, not the name the flower. Judas (Praise) had a good name, but it did not make him a good man. Our Lord’s mother was called “Mary”—she made the name good, though it meant bitterness.

II. NOT THE FAMILY HISTORY.

Botanists call our Blue-bell, “the Hyacinth without writing.” Some people prize their name because it tells of noble ancestry. In this case, rather a sad name than a good name. [Tell the story.—Apollo and Zephyr both wanted to have Hyacinth, a pretty boy, for their own special friend—Hyacinth

liked Apollo best. So one day, when they were all playing at quoits, Zephyr, in a fit of jealousy, blew Apollo's quoit aside so that it hit and killed Hyacinth. Flowers said to have sprung up out of his blood, and on the leaves strange letters which meant woe! woe!] A child's character need not be spoiled though his father's memory is written with sad records!

III. NOT BECAUSE OF ITS RELATIONS.

Squills—Garlic, &c., all belong to the same family. Judged by them any of their relations would hardly be admitted into respectable society. Apply to the case of children with disreputable connections—we must not let the misconduct of their friends prejudice us against receiving them.

IV. BECAUSE OF ITS OWN CHARACTER.

How beautiful it is! How gain such beauty Instead of displaying its leaves when young, it makes a bulb and saves up its strength—so is able to put forth and nourish the flower. If we want a good name, let us work for it when young that we may win it.

XXX.—THE ANEMONE.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth. . . . So is every one that is born of the Spirit."—JOHN iii. 8.

Introduction.—Explain how the word for 'wind' and for 'spirit,' is the same—both a kind of 'breath.'—Text says, in effect, "The breath of God, like all other breathing—like the wind which breathes across the fields—cannot see where it comes from or where it goes to—so, too, when it shakes or stirs something, cannot say how that thing is stirred or shaken." Think of something "born of the spirit"—stirred or shaken by some unseen "breath."

I. THE WIND-FLOWER.

Go out, early in May, to gather wild flowers—may find cuckoo-flowers in the low-lying meadows—water buttercups, marsh-mallows, forget-me-nots; here and there a cowslip—primroses in the hedge-rows—then perhaps some field with a number of quite different flowers—six delicate white petals, some just tinged with pink—very likely none in the next field, yet here plenty! Name "*Anemone*," means "wind-flower," the child of the wind. Can no more say why they should be where they are than can say why the wind blows as it does blow?

II. GOD'S WIND-FLOWERS.

People say, the world like a wilderness, though others think it more like a garden. If a wilderness then, certainly, a wilderness with beautiful wild flowers growing in it. Bad people like the weeds—good people like the flowers—children, perhaps, like the *Anemones*, the beautiful, tender, delicate, wind-flowers. See what they should be like:—

1. *White.*

That means pure and innocent—a white flower soon gets dirty. All manner of smuts—bad thoughts, &c.—ready to besmirch and spoil our purity. If we want to keep the proper colour, must let God's breath sweep off the smuts—ask for more of His *Spirit* to keep away all that might harm. Cf. “Collect for Purity.” “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration”—breathing into and over us—“of Thy Holy Spirit.”

2. *A tinge of pink.*

Pink the colour of blood. From the heart—must be loving—ready to show sympathy. The innocent are not cold and unfeeling. The white of the *Anemone* lets the pink colour show through—so, too, the white of purity lets the warm glow of Love show through. The more we rejoice in God's spiritual breathing, the more kind and loving shall we become.

3. *Six petals always open sky-wards.*

What shall we say our petals are?

Two eyes to look up to God.

Two ears to listen to God's teaching.

Two hands to work for God and to do His bidding.

The Anemone always open towards the sky—
always ready for the influences God sends it. So
we—eyes always open—ears always open—hands
always ready to do as God's Spirit prompts us.

Conclusion.—Whose flowers are we? and we
want to be such as God may love to look upon.
Remember then, like the Anemone, keep the white
of innocence, and the pink of love, and always,
with eyes and ears and hands, be ready to welcome
and return God's greeting.

XXXI.—A MISSIONARY ADDRESS.

"Be ye doers of the word."—JAS. i. 22.

Introduction.—Suppose a knife could see and think—one day its master sends it to the grindstone. What for? Perhaps it would think, "to be brushed by machinery and see lovely fireworks!" But, really, *to be sharpened up*. Why do we come to a missionary meeting or service? To hear stories? sing hymns? have a little excitement? Yes, perhaps, but something more—to be sharpened up and made better workers! Think:—

I. WHAT THE WORK IS.

1. *Very great.* Three-quarters of the world, say 750 millions of people, to be made Christians. Take 12 days and 11 nights to count 1 million at one a second, and no time for eating, drinking, or sleeping! Take 25 years, day and night, to count 750 millions, and all of these need to be spoken to and taught. "Can't do it,"—but our Captain has told us to (Mark xvi. 15). [Illust.: Duke of Wellington to officer who said something could not be done. "Can't be done, sir! It's in the order book, so it *can* be done, and it shall be."]

2. *Terrible need.* What are all these doing with-

out Christ? [Illustrate cruelty and degradation of the heathen by anecdotes.]

II. HOW CAN WE HELP.

Missionaries are sent out—perhaps we may not be able to go ourselves—at any rate not yet. Still :—

1. *We can pray for missionaries.*

See how St. Paul—the great missionary—was helped by prayers. [Picture out from 2 Cor. i. 8-11.] So with others—one missionary saved from a bear, and found, when he got home, that a little boy had been praying for him. “O God, save Mr. —— from the bears.”

2. *We can work for missionaries.*

May be small, but the smallest can do something. Missionary boxes. The pleasure of giving. A great deal of money spent on sweets and nice things to eat, why not give a farthing out of every penny to missions? God gives us money to use for the best—not all for self. Would not like to be cannibals, but if we eat the money which should feed missionaries, it is very much like eating missionaries. [Illustrate by anecdotes as to what children have done.]

3. *We can be missionaries.*

Always take more interest in work of which we know something—a tailor, *e.g.*, takes more interest in tailoring than in shoemaking. If not full missionaries we can be missionary apprentices. [Illust.: Some child near, never comes to church or Sunday-school—or perhaps some grown person. Cannot you ask them to come, and help to bring them? Perhaps some blind person, or old person who cannot

read ; cannot you find half an hour to read a chapter or some hymns to them ?] Plenty of missionary work for all if only we are willing to undertake it, and nothing like being missionaries for giving us an interest in missions.

Conclusion.—Recapitulate. A great work—much need—what we can do. Does any one ask, “Why should we help ?” Surely enough that the Lord Jesus tells us to. He came as a missionary to us from heaven and gave up even His Life to save us. If we would love Him we must be doers of His word.

XXXII.—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me."—LUKE xviii. 16.

All know the story. [Picture out.] But now that He has gone away how can we come to Him? Perhaps feel sometimes much as described in the hymn "I think when I read that sweet story of old!"

We must remember Christ went away only to come back again—says to His Church, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end." That Church like a body through which He works. Christian people are His *members*—their hands are used by Him as His hands. To come to Him then may mean, for us, to come to those who love Him and who will help us in His name. Think how we come :—

I. IN BAPTISM.

Cf. Baptismal service. [Picture out. Font—People standing round—Baby—"The Gospel" which is read.] Who represents Christ? What do? What say? So when we were little babies we also were brought to Christ!

II. COMING TO SUNDAY SCHOOL.

This, too, is, or ought to be, a coming to Christ.

“But we never see Jesus there.” But you see His members—hear kind words such as He would speak. Teachers should speak, “in His name.” It is He who speaks through them, using their mouths to teach and help children.

And surely often those who want to be helped by Christ, find help in the Sunday School. Some kind word from a teacher comes like a kind word from Christ. It *is* from Christ, though He uses the teacher’s mouth to speak it.

III. COMING TO DIVINE SERVICE.

We who speak, speak as Christ’s representatives. What we say is, or ought to be, what Christ says through us. What does He say? “I love the children. If any man wants to come into my kingdom he must become as a little child. If children want to keep in my kingdom they must try to keep children at heart, doing what I want them to do, loving one another, obeying me!”

Thus three ways in which Jesus “suffers the little children to come to Him.” Ay, and many others, for we may come to Him in our own rooms, and, indeed, at all times, everywhere.

IV. SICK CHILDREN.

[This head is specially applicable for an Hospital Sunday.]

Sometimes children sick and ill—cannot get to school or service—what then?

1. Jesus still near them though they cannot see Him—has His way of teaching them, *e.g.*, Texts brought to memory—happy thoughts, &c.

2. Kind friends visit them in His name. Just as He used to touch the sick with His hands when He was in Galilee, so now He uses these other hands.

3. He has put it into the hearts of His people to make a great house where the sick may be cared for. [Explain meaning of word "Hospital." House for sheltering poor people—now-a-days poor *sick* people.]

Think. If Jesus were here now, how glad to see Him and hear His voice! Perhaps have His hand stroke your hair! But He speaks to you by me; says how glad He is to see you here—even asks you to help Him in doing kind things to others. "I have a guest-house for the sick," He says, "some of them are sick children—you can help Me keep it up—help Me say to others, 'Suffer the little children, the little sick children, to come unto Me.'"

XXXIII.—CHILDREN AS TEXTS.

“And He took a child and set him in the midst of them.”—
MARK ix. 36.

Jesus took all kinds of texts. Flowers—men sowing, &c. Once he took a child. See—

I. WHY HE TOOK THIS TEXT.

Picture out. Disciples disputing—who should be greatest, Mark ix. 34. Perhaps nine of them jealous of the three who had just been up the mountain with our Lord, Mark ix. 1–8. Perhaps even James and John jealous of Peter. “This rock.” Anyway their Master called them round—took His text, one they could all *see*, and preached His sermon.

II. WHAT HE SAID.

1. Greatest—he who should be most like a child. Those who wanted to be greatest should make themselves least.

What a mistake disciples had made! Have not you sometimes made one of the same kind? Want to be a man—to be great. Why, if *men* want to be great, must grow back again into little children, Matt. xviii. 3. [Pius V. said he had a good hope of heaven until he was made a cardinal, when the hope

grew dim ; and when he was made Pope, the hope fled.]

2. Those receiving *such* children in His Name received Him.

III. SHOULD WE LIKE TO BE CHRIST'S TEXTS ?

How proud if we had lived then, and He had taken *us* and preached from *us* ! [Some say the child was St. Ignatius, and that because of this he was called Theophorus, which may mean "one whom God carried." It is even said he was never ordained by a bishop, because Jesus had laid *His* hands on him.]

Well, each one of us may be His text. How? Doing as He wishes, because He wishes it. "What makes that boy so obedient? Used to be troublesome." Oh, he is trying to please Christ. Christ helps him, and will help you. "That sick girl—how patient." Christ again. See what St. Paul says ; how Christ preached from him, 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. So may preach from you sermons on punctuality, attention, kindness, obedience, &c. Illustrate, and use anecdotes if thought necessary.

If Christ does not preach from us, still we cannot help being texts ; only then the Devil preaches ; preaches, too, against Christ. Sometimes very strong sermons. *Illustrate.* "Look at that boy—he goes to Sunday-school, &c. Religion can't be much good."

Whose texts shall *we* be ?

XXXIV.—LESSONS FROM LAMPS.

“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—
MATT. v. 16.

Men like lamps. God has given a light to all, John i. 9. We the light-bearers, that is, *lamps*. Many different kinds, just as with the lamps we use (gas, oil, paraffine, &c.), and do not all burn equally well. Other lamps may teach us what we ought not to be, and what we ought to be.

I. WARNINGS FROM BAD LAMPS.

Illustrate from personal experience.

1. *Water in the pipe.*

Light bobs up and down—intermittent. Some people just like that. Peter before Christ's ascension—“Thou art the Christ,” Matt. xvi. 16—“I know not the Man,” Matt. xxvi. 74. Want a *steady* light.

2. *Lamps that smoke and smell.*

Cf. people that do right unpleasantly. The son in the parable: “I go not,” but he *went*. Want a *pleasant* light.

3. *Lamps that leak.*

Cf. people who waste their talents. Want to make the most of our gifts.

4. *Lamps that get stopped up.*

Cf. people who are hindered by sins, &c. Christ says that cares and riches “choke the Word,” Matt. xiii. 22.

II. GOOD LAMPS.

Contrast with the four kinds of bad lamps. Our Lord Himself the one *perfect* example. He could say of Himself, John xvii. 4. Always thinking of that. Test of goodness in us:—People don't trouble so much about the *lamp*, so long as they enjoy the *light*. *Cf. text.*

III. HOW TO BE GOOD LAMPS.

1. Lamps want feeding.

The vision Zechariah saw, Zech. iv. Holy Spirit like the oil.

2. Lamps want cleaning and putting in order. Lamps in tabernacle, Exod. xxvii. 20, 21; Aaron and his sons to see to them.

We are God's lamps—a High Priest to cleanse and order us. Who? Let us pray Him to remedy the evils in us, that we may let our light shine sweetly and pleasantly before men.

XXXV.—CHRIST'S POSTMEN.

"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."—2 Cor. iii. 3.

Going to some new place, take letters of introduction. Apollos when he left Corinth took such letters with him. Paul says, "I don't want any letters of introduction from you—every one knows how I love you. Jesus Christ has written on my heart love to Corinth ; I carry that letter of His with me, and it can introduce me anywhere. I am His postman—my heart is His paper—the letter is written with the Spirit of God." Think this morning about Christ's letters, and Christ's letter-carriers or postmen.

I. CHRIST'S LETTERS.

Only read once in Gospels of our Lord's writing, John viii. What on ? What with ? Cf. Proverb, "Write injuries in dust, kindness in marble."

In Book of Revelation, seven letters from Him—but not written with His own hand. St. John His secretary.

Yet plenty of His letters in the world—some here, let us hope, this morning—letters by which He speaks to us now that He is away for a time.

1. What written on.

(a.) Not tables of stone—short letters used to be written on stone tablets. Remember once God writing on stone tables—when?

(b.) “Tables which are fleshy hearts.”

[Queen Mary Tudor—“Calais.”]

So when Christ writes letters—fixes them on *our hearts*. Makes us love something or another which He loves—others notice and say, “That is Jesus Christ’s writing.”

2. What written with.

“Not ink”—that quite certain if written on heart. If tablets are alive, then must write with something living. So “with Spirit of the living God.” His Spirit comes into our hearts, and makes us love what He wants us to love.

But tablets dirty—all manner of things written there, “I love this—I love that.” First cleans, then writes—How clean?

3. When written, easily read.

“Manifestly declared.”

[Our letters—write—then carefully put inside envelope—to read must open envelope.]

Our hearts inside—our bodies the envelopes—but *all letters written on the heart show through the envelope, e.g.:*

Heart makes feet run and hands work. Letters written on heart are not only letters, they are also advertisements.

4. What they say.

In different ways—but all to the same effect. “Love God.” “Love Jesus.” “Love one another.”

II. CHRIST'S POSTMEN.

Who will be Christ's postmen? Any one may—boys *or* girls.

[Good woman met by friend coming out of church.
"Is the sermon done?" "No, it is all *said*. It has got to be *done*."]

1. The heart.

He must have that to write the letter on first.

"Lord, send Thy Spirit down to write Thy law upon my heart."

What Law? Law of Love.

2. Take care the letter shows through the envelope.

Do what He wants you to—be kind—obedient, &c.

So all see what He has written.

3. If not Christ's postmen—whose?

Heart must have something written on it, and, whatever it is, it will show through the envelope.

XXXVI.—OPPORTUNITIES.

"She hath done what she could : she hath come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying."—**M**ARK xiv. 8.

The little family at Bethany—describe. The Friend and Physician. His absence. Illness and death of brother. The Friend comes—four days too late! The sisters; the grave; the raising; Mary's gratitude. What do to show it? The precious ointment, long treasured. An opportunity used. Has not the same Friend done much for us? Are we grateful? How show our gratitude?

I. SOMETHING FOR EVERY ONE TO DO IF THEY WILL LOOK OUT.

The smallest may do something.

Something which perhaps another could not do.
Tyrolese proverb—

"God has His plan
For every man."

Do little things well, and very likely get an opportunity of doing greater things afterwards.

Cf. Parable of the Pounds.

II. CHRIST PRAISES NOT GREAT THINGS, BUT THINGS WELL DONE, WHICH WE CAN DO.

Mary in this story.

Cf. Poor widow and two mites.

So with us. Lessons learnt well for His sake. Kind deeds. [Boys who could get no money for missionaries; so picked up pins and sold them. Must do something.]

Some children nearer God in heaven than much greater people, in the world's eyes, because they used their opportunities.

III. WE MUST DO SOMETHING. TAKE CARE IT BE GOOD, NOT BAD.

“Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

Judas did “what he could,” but for evil.

So boys and girls do “what they can” to spoil a school and injure others. [*Illust.*]

Even when repented of, bad things will leave their mark.

[Little Amos hammered a lot of nails into a board. Father told him to get them out again. “All out, father?” “Ay, Amos, but you can’t get the marks out.”]

Think what our Lord has done for us, then for His sake do what we can, so that He may say of us with praise, “He—she—hath done what she could.”

XXXVII.—EYES.

“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.”—Ps. cxix. 37.

Bunyan's Holy War. The gates of Mansoul. Some of the strongest enemies attacked “Eye” gate. So with us; may get into mischief through our eyes, at same time may get great good through rightly using them. Think of—

I. SOME EYES WHICH LED THEIR OWNERS WRONG.

1. Eve, Gen. iii. 6.
2. Lot, Gen. xiii. 10.
3. Achan, Josh. vii. 21.

In each case picture out and show result.

1. Paradise Lost.
2. Ruin.
3. Death.

Have not *your* eyes sometimes led *you* wrong?”

That boy in disgrace—lessons not learnt because he would not keep his *eyes* on the book.

Just now at prayer time—*saying* prayers, not *praying* them. Why? Eyes wandered off first, and then heart rambled after the eyes.

II. SOME EYES WHICH LED THEIR OWNERS RIGHT.

1. Moses, Ex. iii. 3.
2. Israelites, Numb. xxi. 8, 9.
3. Simeon (Luke ii. 30) had been looking out before, or could not have seen them.

4. John the Baptist (John i. 29-31) saw himself and helped others to see.

What made difference between I. and II.? I. Let eyes lead them. II. Let God lead their eyes.

One sight *all* must see. Rev. i. 7.

How feel then?

If eyes have been leading us wrong—

“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn.”

If they have led us right—

“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, and behold the land which is very far off.”

Let us ask God to help us *look* right now that we may *see* right then.

XXXVIII.—ONLY A CHILD.

"For I am a child."—JER. 1. 6.

Who Jeremiah was (ver. 1). Not like some boys—pushing, ambitious—but very timid, quiet, fond of books. Picture out God's interview with him. [Samuel is a parallel case, though probably Jeremiah was older.] What this poor timid lad was to be and do (ver. 5, 10). Harsh, disagreeable, almost impossible. "Oh, I can't do that, I am only a child!" Such an answer sometimes good, sometimes bad. Think—

I. WHEN SUCH AN ANSWER IS GOOD.

When it shows real humility. "Only a child, therefore must not put myself forward." St. Augustine says there are three steps to heaven; first is humility, and second humility, and third humility.

What a blessing if some of us would say so sometimes, *e.g.*—

1. Boy asks you to do something your mother has forbidden. [Take instance—go a walk on Sunday, &c.] "Mother says I mustn't." "Surely not going always to be tied to mother's apron strings!" Right answer, "I am only a child." How often say instead, "I'm quite old enough to look out for myself."

Or, 2. Girl has some money. Friend shows her earrings, or necklace, &c. "Get something like that—brighten yourself up a bit." Who will answer, "Not fit for me; I am only a child"?

Or, 3. Want to show how clever you are—how much you know. So put in *your* word when older people are speaking. Should think, "I cannot speak; I am only a child."

So, sometimes, a *good* answer—and more, a *brave* one. Safe to be laughed at. "Oh yes, you are afraid!" Better *be* brave and be *called* a coward, than be a *coward* and be called *brave*. None so brave as those who do not like being laughed at, yet who *will* do right even though others laugh at them.

II. WHEN SUCH AN ANSWER IS BAD.

Refer to the history. *Who* was speaking to Jeremiah? When *God* speaks should be like *Samuel*, ready to obey, however disagreeable.

"Oh, but God does not speak to children now!" Does He not? I think He does—tells them, too, to do things which they don't like. *E.g.*, "I want you to work harder; take more pains with lessons." "I want you to speak when you hear your friend say a wrong word." "Those two pennies you have, I want you to give part to help me." Take care when *God* speaks, *not* to give Jeremiah's answer.

III. GOD'S REPLY.

Ver. 7, "Say not, I am a child . . . I am with thee."

So Jeremiah went on—did his work—didn't *like*

it. It brought great trouble—imprisonment—enemies, &c.—but *God* helped him. *Cf.* St. Paul, 2. Cor. xii. 8-10; Phil. iv. 13.

Remember this: When others ask us to do something doubtful, give this answer, “I cannot, I am only a child.”

When God asks us to do anything, however hard, think instead, “I can do *all* things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” “Though a child I *can* do it, for even a child can trust God.”

XXXIX.—LITTLE THINGS.

“Is it not a little one?”—GEN. xix. 20.

I. LITTLE STEPS MAKE LONG JOURNEYS.

Expect it was not first time Lot had said that—perhaps the secret of his ruin. Gen. xiii. 11. “Don’t like leaving Abraham, but it can’t *much* matter.” 12. “Best to pitch tent with door opening *away* from Sodom, but after all more cheerful this way, and it makes such a *little* difference.” “Surely you won’t go any nearer.” “May as well live inside the city; it is but a *small* change after all.” So little by little, step by step, from wealth, prosperity, friendship with Abraham, to ruin, and a cave to cower in (xix. 30). [*Cf. Eve—looked, listened, longed, touched, took, tasted.*] Man may walk 1000 miles, but he has to do it step by step. Each step small enough, but if in the wrong direction where will many small steps lead to?

II. LITTLE SEEDS YIELD GREAT HARVESTS.

Little things not only add up, they grow and multiply. Something like what Isaiah says, lx. 22, and true of bad things as well as good ones.

[Seed on palm of hand—mere speck—no consequence “there.” Brush it off. Twenty years later.

"What is this?" "A tree." "However came it here?" "You planted it when you swept aside that seed."]

Ever thought of this: *We are always sowing seeds.*

1. *Thoughts.*

Come to us, like seed blown by the wind—need not keep them, but *may*, if think them over, ponder on them, that is *sowing* them in mind. Then they will grow.

(a) *Good thoughts.*

[Coming after Jesus was a thought once in the mind of Andrew. If he had not sown it Simon might never have been Peter. Peter's work and writings the fruit in part of that seed.]

[Once no Sunday-schools in England. Show how they grew from a thought.]

(b) *Bad thoughts.*

Seen already—Lot, Eve. Trace growth of Rebecca's thought, "I *must* have that blessing for my boy."

2. *Words.*

These are thoughts sown outside of us, in minds of other people it may be.

May treat as under last head (1) *Good words.* [God's made the world; Christ's have been saving men ever since they were spoken; or take some simple anecdote of power of a good word.] (2) *Bad words.* [Illustrate in a similar way.] Cf. Matt. xii. 36, 37.

3. *Actions.*

Rather a bigger kind of words. [All seeds not same size, though all small.]

As before may take *good* and *bad*. The harvest from a small bad action may be illustrated thus:—

Boy inattentive in class, plays, example makes the rest fidgety. Teacher disturbed and worried. When *he* gets back home, cross, makes family uncomfortable. Go to church, inattentive, distract attention of others. Perhaps fifty people disturbed two hours later by the ripple of discomfort that boy set going.

So see how important these small things—small steps, long journeys; small seeds, great harvests; and we are *always* doing *little* things. What care then we ought to take! [Fancy if in powder magazine, and like a cat with sparks coming out all over you, what a fright you would be in, what care you would take!] “Is it not a little one?” Yes; but what sized thing will come of it?

Best safeguard is to pray. Say, “Lord, I can’t help always doing little things, taking little steps, sowing little seeds. Show me how to walk. Teach me how to sow. Only if Thou take care of me can I keep from doing harm!”

XL.—CHOOSING.

"Many are called, but few are chosen."—MATT. xxii. 14.

Text a kind of moral tacked on to story. Tell the parable in your own words, or can begin by telling the story narrated in 1 Sam. xvi., and then bringing in the parable.

I. HOW IS IT SO FEW ARE CHOSEN?

1. Perhaps only a few wanted. [Lady goes shopping. Counter covered with things she looks at—only *chooses* a few, because only *wants* a few.] Samuel only chose *one*, partly because only one was wanted. Not the reason here (ver. 9). Cf. Isa. lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17.

2. Only so few *fit*. [Great palace to be built, find work for any number of workmen. Crowds come, but some are miners, some gardeners. Two-thirds know nothing about building. Can't choose *them*, not fit.] [The builder wants stone—plenty of quarries near, but some very soft, some too hard and gritty. Can't take all that offers, must choose what is most fit.] God building His Church, in which stones, &c., are men and women, boys and girls. Can only choose what is fit for his purpose.

II. HOW GOD CHOOSES.

See what He said to Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 7).

Want to see how man chooses. *Cf.* Isaac and his two sons. Joseph (Gen. xlvi. 17, 18).

Man looks outside, God looks inside. Those are fit for His use whose hearts are right with Him.

What sort of heart will God choose? One that trusts Him. *Cf.* Abraham (Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv.).

III. TWO THOUGHTS TO CLOSE WITH.

1. God is still choosing. Do you want Him to choose you? [*Cf.* anxiety to be chosen when sides are picked up at cricket, foot-ball, &c.] Look to *heart* then. Get Him to make that right. If you *trust* Him, he will have you on His side.

2. Try and copy God. Often have to choose. Don't choose by outsides, but by insides. [Contrast Lot and Abraham.]

May illustrate by story of the three caskets. See *Gesta Romanorum*, or Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." *Gold* full of dead men's bones—"Who chooseth me shall get what he deserveth." *Silver* full of worms and earth—"Who chooseth me shall get what his nature desireth." *Lead* full of precious stones—"Who chooseth me shall get what God hath provided for him." The princess rightly choosing "not the first, I deserve nothing; not the second, my nature desireth evil; let me have the third, for God is the best chooser."

XLI.—A FIXED HEART.

“ He shall not be afraid of evil tidings : his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.”—Ps. cxii. 7.

Introduction.—[This may be used with effect in any address taken from the acrostic Psalms.] Some boys and girls learn hymns—rhyme helps them. Jew boys and girls used to do the same more than 2000 years ago. What we call “ Book of Psalms ” their hymn book. No rhymes; but some hymns easy to learn, because the lines put in alphabetical order, 1st line, or set of lines, begins with A, 2nd with B, and so on. This cxii. Psalm one of these easy hymns, *cf.* cxii., cxix., &c. Our text would be remembered as the lines beginning with M and N. See what it tells about:—

I. A MAN WHOSE HEART IS FIXED.

As we say, “ made up his mind.”

1. People without fixed hearts, who could not make up their minds—

Reuben, Gen. xxxvii. 22, &c., *cf.* xlvi. 22. He spoke, but he did not act, though he was the eldest, *cf.* xlvi. 4.

Orpah, Ruth i. 14.

2. People who had fixed hearts—

Jacob made up his mind to get the blessing.
Solomon to be wise, a good judge.

Ruth to help her mother-in-law, not leave her—she
“clavē unto her”—to be as useful as she could be.

You perhaps have made up *your* mind, *e.g.*, to get
all the marks you can—so get prize, &c.

II. WHAT CAME OF ITS BEING FIXED.

“Not afraid of evil tidings.”

But some people, with hearts fixed, would be very
much afraid of evil tidings, *e.g.* :—

1. Man made up his mind to get a fortune—not
quite well—doctor, “Can’t live”—a fixed heart
makes him more afraid.

2. You to have a holiday; working for it—heart
fixed—very much afraid if it looks rainy the night
before.

Why did not this man fear?

III. WHERE HIS HEART WAS FIXED.

Even more important than being fixed. “Trusting
in the Lord.” [Ship in storm anchored to floating
island. Good to be anchored; but if the anchorage
shifts what then?] *cf.* Matt. vi. 19–21.

Illustrate from fittings of a ship’s cabin—lamps,
glasses, &c., not fixed below, but hung from above;
so when ship rolls they do not roll with ship, but
hang steady. Apply, *cf.* Col. iii. 2.

Recapitulate—Fixed heart a good thing, but more
important *where* it is fixed. Where is your heart
fixed? [*cf.* Collect for 4th Sunday after Easter].

XLII.—UNCEASING PRAYER.

“Pray without ceasing.”—I THESS. v. 17.

What! *always* praying? How can I? Dressing, eating, walking, &c., all this besides prayer? Yes; but they can all help us to pray. Little girl once found this out—*dressing*, she prayed for a better dress, Rev. vii. 9; *eating*, reminded her of other food, John vi. 32-34 [*cf.* the grace, “We thank Thee, Lord, for this our food,” &c.]; *walking*, spoke of another walk, Ps. cxix. 1. So, then, *one* way of doing what St. Paul tells us is—

1. *Let everything we do remind us of something to be prayed about.*

But other ways of praying besides words. [Man in a good service—wants his son to be taken on—knows that his master knows his wish—thinks, “If I work well he will grant it;” so takes pains always to look neat—so please master (praying with his dress). Works very hard and carefully (praying with his work), &c.]. So with us—all our prayers may be put into *one* prayer, “Thy will be done.” If really want that, can always be praying it: *In dress*, neat, careful, clean, because God’s will, 1 Cor. x. 31, 32. *In eating and drinking*, not greedy but grateful. *In lessons*, doing best to learn. *At play*, “rejoice

evermore," &c. ; what St. Paul says to slaves (Col. iii. 23), true for us :—may do everything "heartily," with our hearts as well as hands, as to the Lord, because God wills. So another way of obeying the text is—

2. *Let everything we do say, "Thy will be done."*

One other thing. Come and look at a little prayer meeting—up in a mountain (picture out from Ex. xvii. 8-16); prayer ceasing, success ceases—then others lift up his hands—so prays *without ceasing*.

So, sometimes, boy or girl wants something (help to conquer bad temper, or do some work); prays—no better (temper breaks out again, &c.). "Oh, no use praying, just as bad as ever!" Ah! you must pray *without ceasing*—keep on—keep on. [Elijah (I Kings xviii. 42-46) wanted rain—prays—boy goes to look—"nothing!" Again, and again, and again, and again—seven times—then at last (ver. 44). He prayed without ceasing. May cf. also Luke xviii. 6, 7.] How many prayers like runaway ring or knock! So then—

3. *Persevere—keep on. Go on praying till the prayer is answered.*

Three ways of obeying command in text. (Recapitulate 1, 2, 3.) Make it our text this week, and try to see whether we can't do what it tells us. Not so hard as it seems at first, and if we ask God, He will give His Holy Spirit to show us how to do it.

XLIII.—BAD HABITS, AND HOW TO BREAK THEM.

"Deliverance to the captives."—LUKE iv. 18.

Can picture out scene in the synagogue at Nazareth. "Joseph's son back—what will He say?" All eager. Describe briefly what He did and said. Think to-day then of Jesus as the Deliverer. We, too, get bound and want loosing.

I. How WE GET BOUND.

[Seen a fly get near treacle-pot—sweet, pleasant. Gets on edge—tastes—sticky—little thin threads get about its legs and wings—goes on—soon all tied up with treacle. Can't get loose anyhow.] So with us—something pleasant—like it—must have more of it—and *more*, &c. Seem to stick to it—can't get away—tied up. "Set our affections on it"—so get fast—wound round with threads of habit. Thick ropes are made of thin threads. The devil begins with a thread, but he makes it drag a rope after it. [How they bridged Niagara—rocket took a thread across—thread pulled string—string pulled cord—cord rope—rope chain—and so at last bridge.]

Little by little bad habits grow, and like the fly and the treacle we find we can't get loose. Have not you found it so? Some bad habit—*tried* to break it. Is it not very hard—almost impossible?

II. HOW TO GET LOOSE.

[Fly can't loose himself—somebody must take it and wash it.] So some one must loose us. Jesus said who that "some one" was that morning at Nazareth.

When on earth was always delivering captives. [Illustrate.—The paralytic—tied tongue—closed eyes, &c.—woman with a spirit of infirmity (Luke xiii. 11-16). "Satan hath bound."]

You are bound—bad habits—can't get loose—come to the deliverer—ask Him—He can and will break them for you. [Illustrate by anecdote if necessary.]

III. AFTER LOOSING.

[Suppose I loose the fly, and he doesn't believe he is loose—stands fast—tied up so long, think it's no use *trying* to move.]

People sometimes like that. Ask to be delivered. Jesus does deliver, but they won't *believe* they are delivered. Still bound, only now by *unbelief*. [Negro woman after emancipation—"Too good to be true," so stopped on, and slaved away as much as ever.] How make sure that we are free? Go and do something which the habit used to hinder us from doing. [*Cf.* Paralytic, "Take up thy bed and walk."] Apply to special cases, *e.g.*, *sloth*—never can get up when you are called—remember to-morrow morning "Jesus has delivered me;" *greediness*—never can leave off eating when you ought; *speaking unkindly*, &c. Just be quite sure that Jesus is what He said He was—then *ask* Him to deliver you, and there is no bad habit which He will not break. [*Cf.* Collect immediately before the Prayer for Parliament.]

XLIV.—AN INVITATION.

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”—Ps. xxxiv. 11.

[One of the alphabetical psalms. Cf. Outline XLI. on Ps. cxii. 7.]

Notice—

I. THE TEACHER WHO INVITES.

Don't know who first said the words, but our Great Teacher is always saying them. *Here* now saying them to us (Matt. xviii. 20).

Think—

1. How wise He is.

Made the world (Col. i. 16, 17).

Became a child—so knows all about children—just how they feel, &c.

Grew to be a man—so knows all about men.

2. How kind He is.

[Picture out Peter and the rest trying to send off those nuisances of children. “Stop, Peter, listen to the Master.” “Suffer little children,” &c.] Just the same now (Heb. xii. 8).

Think, then, when you come here : I am coming to the Great Teacher—so wise—so kind—He wants to teach *me* ! “How does He teach ?” Sometimes by the *hymns*. Sometimes by the *chapters from the Bible*. Sometimes by the *sermon*. Different ways.

[Just as in school—different books, black-board, &c.]

II. THE SCHOLARS INVITED.

“Ye children.”

1. Actual children. Always glad to teach *them*.
2. All others. Cf. Matt. xviii. 3; John iii. 3.

Two things they must do :

1. *Come*. Can’t learn if they keep away from Teacher. Can keep away from Jesus Christ’s school just as from others. No School Board officer to compel you to come in.
2. *Hearken*. “*Nothing to pay*.” Yes, you must pay *attention*.

III. THE LESSON.

Now we have the children in school, and the Teacher ready to teach them. What is the Lesson to be about? The fear of the Lord; i.e., how to trust God—best of all lessons.

“Begin with the alphabet?” Well, this *is* the alphabet. Prov. i. 7, ix. 10. But it is a great deal more besides. Cf. Prov. xv. 33 (“The *instruction* of wisdom”), xiv. 27 (a fountain of life). “By it” (xxii. 4) “are riches and honour and life.” Cf. text: “*No want to them that fear Him*.” [Not have all our *wishes*, but shall have all our *wants* supplied.]

To-day you have *come*, have you *hearkened*? What has the teacher been teaching *you* about the fear of the Lord?

[May illustrate and apply from the parts of the service—hymns, psalms, lessons, &c.—which have preceded the address.]

XLV. MIRRORS.

"Not as Moses, which put a *vail* over his face."—2 Cor. iii. 13.

I. MOSES AND HIS VAIL.

Picture out. Moses up mountain—talking with God. Comes down—face all glistening. "Ah, he's seen God, brought back some of the glory with him." But as they look, brightness begins to fade. "What kind of glory this that vanishes—can it be *God's* glory?" So, vail that the fading might not be seen. When he went back to speak with God, took off vail. *Cf.* 2 Cor. iii. 16.

[May illustrate from damp pebble reflecting sunlight—as pebble dries, reflection fades.]

II. OUR LORD.

When Jesus on earth, often up mountains. What for? Yet after talking with God did not need to wear a vail. Always reflected perfectly (Col. i. 15).

[Not like damp pebble, but like perfect mirror, turned towards sun.]

III. OURSELVES.

Cf. 2 Cor. iii. 18. We can't see God, but who shows God to us? [In room, sun out of sight, but mirror in window may reflect it, other mirrors in room may catch and multiply reflection.] Our Lord perfect mirror. We reflecting Him, reflect God at

second hand ; " beholding, *as in a glass*, the glory," we ourselves, as reflecting glasses, "are changed," reflecting it, "into the same image."

How can we catch reflection ?

1. Must have our hearts uncovered.

[Mirror packed in crate can't reflect.]

Our hearts are the mirrors, if all packed up with thoughts of world, self, pleasure, &c., never get a chance of reflecting.

2. Hearts must be turned in right direction.

[Mirror with back to sun won't reflect the sun-light—must be turned right round.]

We must be *converted*. Hearts turned right round towards Christ.

3. Hearts must be cleansed.

[Dirty mirror, even when unpacked and turned in right direction, won't reflect perfectly.]

Our hearts—clouded over by sin—even when turned towards Christ, need making bright. Cf. Catechism, "The Holy Ghost who sanctifieth us."

We ought to be reflecting God's glory, so that others can see it. Must have *open* hearts—turned in right direction—being cleansed. Who can do all this for us? If we ask He will—so "let our light shine," &c.

How are we reflecting ?

[Teachers using this outline are strongly recommended to act upon the suggestions contained in the introductory note to the series. The outline merely gives them a seed thought to which they themselves must act as gardeners—it is quite sufficiently *suggestive*, but the *efficiency* of the resulting address must depend upon the gardening.]

XLVI.—LESSONS FROM CLOCKS.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.”—MATT. vii. 21.

Remember a story which our Lord once told (Matt. xxi. 28-30). One son said he *would* go and didn't, the other said he *wouldn't* and did. Both wrong, but which the worst? (ver. 31.) Many people like these; sometimes think all such very like some clocks we see—*hands* point one way, but the *striking* does not agree with the *hands*. Let us see—

I. CLOCKS OUT OF ORDER.

Three kinds of bad clocks:

1. *The HANDS are right, but the STROKE is wrong.*

People like this. [Boy trying to do right, but his *tongue* always making mischief. If only you could take out that *tongue* you would say, “What an admirable boy!” Cf. the *first* son in the parable —also St. Peter (Mark xiv. 66-72)—he was a true disciple, and yet what did his *tongue* say?

2. *The STROKE is right, but the HANDS are wrong.*

Cf. Balaam (Numbers xxiv.). What a beautiful “stroke,” but (Numbers xxxi. 8) what a terrible

example. So, too, Judas, going out with the rest, and proclaiming, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Yet what sort of an example did *he* set? So the second son in the parable. Any here like that? *Tongue* can say the creed, join in the prayers, sing the hymns; but what are the *hands* doing? What does the *life* say?

3. *The hands and the stroke both wrong.*

Clocks like this no good at all. Many people very like them. What they *say* is bad, and what they *do* is bad. Only fit to be destroyed. If you want a description of them see Rom. iii. 13-18.

On the other hand, see what we should be like:

II. CLOCKS IN ORDER.

They strike right and point right. Cf. Joseph and our Lord Himself. If we want to be like these then must live out our creed. Say, "I believe," &c., and live as Christians should live. Be loving, obedient, honest, truthful, industrious, prayerful. [Heathen Queen of Madagascar always took for her officers "praying people." Said she could depend upon them—they said what they meant, and meant what they said.]

One thing more:

III. HOW TO SET WRONG CLOCKS RIGHT.

No good fiddling the hands about—the mischief lies deeper—must see to the *works*. So with us—must see to *our* "works." It is the *heart* that is out of order. Pray to God for His Holy Spirit that He may make the *heart* right (Rom. v. 5). So by His help we shall be *consistent*—our words and deeds

will hang together. [Another illustration is the mariner's compass. The needle must be *magnetised* to make it point in the right direction.]

Note.—This address was suggested by a lesson—3rd Sunday after Easter—in “Lessons for the Ecclesiastical Year,” by the Rev. J. B. Draper. A more *suggestive* book for preachers and givers of addresses it would be hard to find, though, perhaps, with the former, it might rather tend to the production of what have been called “salad” sermons. The volume is published by the C. of E. S. S. Institute.

XLVII.—ALL THINGS UNTO EDIFYING.

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”—1 Cor. xiv. 26.

Introduction.—Picture out, from context, a service in Corinth such as St. Paul refers to; imagine yourself an eye-witness, and describe as if you *saw* it. What confusion! So St. Paul gives two rules—one in verse 40, and this other in text. In our services we take care to keep *both*; think, this morning, how we keep this one.

I. WHAT IS EDIFICATION?

Building up. But who? and what? Seen men building a church; builders and a master-builder over them, all trying to build up in stone that which the architect has planned. *Cf.* the Church which *God* has planned. Our Lord the Master-builder—men and women, girls and boys, all stones—*living* stones. But who are the workmen? Well, the stones themselves are the workmen, though there may be others helping. *Living* stones can build up themselves, and build up one another; and the Master-builder Himself is like the rest—*Master-builder*, and *chief* corner stone (Eph. ii. 19-22).

What we want is to be *built up* ourselves, and to help *build up* others.

II. HOW THE "ALL THINGS" IN OUR SERVICE HELP TO BUILD UP.

1. *The stones need cleansing.*

Seen bricklayer, before laying a brick, pass trowel over surface, and so get off dirt and roughness; and after bricks are placed, often need cleansing to get off smoke and dirt. So, too, with the living stones—they must be cleansed first before they can be used—and afterwards, again and again in this world, further cleansing will be wanted; *cf.* John xiii. 10. How is this done in our services? *Cf.* opening sentences, exhortation, confession, absolution.

2. *The stones need riveting and cementing.*

Not enough to pile them up—piling up is not building—mortar needed, clamps, &c. (*Describe.*) What rivets living stones together? It must be "through the Spirit;" then Love is the cement, "the bond of perfection" (Col. iii. 14); and Peace, too, is another "bond" (Eph. iv. 3). With living stones the bonds must be living bonds, and living bonds—*cf.* muscles, &c., of the body—are strengthened by exercise. So in our services "common" prayer and "common" praise—not "*I*" and "*my*," but "*we*" and "*our*"—all praying for all—strengthening the bonds—*setting* the cement. Illustrate from some of the Prayers and Psalms; only in the Creed "*I believe.*"

3. *The stones need engraving.*

In building church the stones are put in position in the rough, and then chiselled afterwards by the

sculptor. So also in God's temple. Made members of Christ at baptism, then afterwards instructed, chiselled into shape, by teaching—*cf.* the Baptismal Service, “called upon to hear sermons.” Sermons are the decorator's tool; other parts of service have same object, *e.g.*, the Lessons, Psalms, and Hymns.

Conclusion.—Must remember that nothing can be to edification, save as it helps build upon the one foundation. All our services point to Christ—all our prayers are offered through Him. And He, too, is the Master-builder who will build us up if we trust Him, and help us so to act as to build up others. Remember we have not only to get help ourselves, but also to help one another. Your inattention and carelessness may prevent others from being built up; your *reverence* and *attention* may help others as well as yourselves. Let us look to the Master-builder, and in all things seek His aid. So, and so only, can “all things be done unto edifying.”

XLVIII.—THE INTERPRETER.

“Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God ?”—GEN. xl. 8.

Sometimes we see a picture—very pretty—bright colours—pleasant faces—only we cannot tell *what it means*. Presently some one comes and *explains* it,—tells the story in words which we can understand—*interprets* it for us. Notice :—

I. Two PICTURES WHICH NEEDED AN INTERPRETER.

Draw pictures. [Sketch out the story. Two men in prison—dreary days—what a relief the nights must have brought them ! Prison walls can't shut out the sights which come to men in sleep.]

1. *The picture which the butler saw.*

Beautiful vine. Three branches. Budded, blossomed, brought forth clusters. A man, himself, the king's cup in his hand ; seizes a bunch of the ripe grapes, squeezes juice into cup, and gives the cup into the king's hand.

2. *The picture which the baker saw.*

A man, himself ; three baskets of fine bread on his head. In the top basket all manner of confectionery. Birds of the air hovering round and picking out the choicest morsels.

II. THE INTERPRETER AND HIS INTERPRETATIONS.

If we want to know what a picture means the best person to tell us is the man who painted it. Who had painted these dream pictures?

[*Illust.* : Sometimes see a plate on which child has been rubbing paints; a quantity of colour smudges—blue—red—green—yellow—all mixed up together! Many dreams something like this, just a quantity of thought smudges. The butler thinks about grapes and cups; the baker about bread and confectionery; no wonder that in their dreams they should see pictures which remind them of such things. Once a great artist, Turner, got his grandchildren to rub their fingers about in the colours on his palette. When they had made a great mess he said, "Now stop," and then from their smudges he painted a most beautiful picture. God sometimes does this with our thought-smudges. So, here, with the butler and the baker, He took their confused thoughts and made clear pictures out of them.]

In the prison was a man who trusted God, and because he trusted God, therefore God trusted him. He understood what the dream pictures meant, God taught him to interpret them. This was his explanation:—The three branches and the three baskets each meant three days. The butler squeezing grapes into the king's cup would get his place back again in that time. The baker, whose confectionery was stolen by the birds, would lose his head as he had lost his wares. So, too, it came about, and the interpretation was found to be true.

Conclusion.—Some people like to have dreams,

but dreams are not much good if they have no meaning or if we can't find out what the meaning is. God sometimes teaches men by dreams, but He has many other ways of teaching them. The world itself is God's great picture-book, full of meaning for those who can *interpret* it. Better to be an interpreter than a dreamer. *Cf.* Job. xxxiii. 23. If we can interpret, not dreams only but all nature will bring us messages from God. Can we be interpreters? Yes, if we are like Joseph, pure, simple, trusting God, trying to obey Him. Those who trust God, God trusts. If like Joseph, we shall find, all about us, pictures with a meaning to them. Everything about us has a meaning if only we could understand. The seeds growing say to the interpreter, "Don't be in a hurry; first the grain, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The wind says, "Ye know not whence I come or whither I go, and God's Spirit is like me." The moon says, "I am so bright and beautiful, because I reflect the light of the sun; if you want to be bright and beautiful you must reflect the glory of Christ." We need not mind dreams, good or bad: let us learn to trust and obey God, so that He may teach us to be good interpreters.

XLIX.—THE POWER OF FAITH.

"Through faith."—HEB. xi. 33.

[Consider text in connection with the following verses. This lesson depends for its interest upon the incidents referred to being pictured out intelligently.]

See :—

I. WHAT MEN HAVE DONE.

1. *Subdued kingdoms.*

[*Illust.:* The conquest of Canaan—siege of Jericho. Here, perhaps, achievements of Judas Maccabæus specially referred to. His name, "The hammer." Sketch his history.]

2. *Stilled lions and quenched the power of fire.*

[*Illust.:* Daniel in lions' den—the three "children" in the furnace—stories which some think became popular in the time of Judas Maccabæus and his successors.]

3. *Women received their dead raised up, &c.*

The reference to those tortured who were firm, "looking to a better raising," is here, certainly, to the narratives recorded in 2 Maccabees, chaps. vi. and vii. : Eleazar and the mother with her seven sons.

[The whole passage is associated with the time of

the Maccabees and this lends to it an added interest, for children—in common with their elders—like to hear about history, not recorded in the Bible, which yet concerns the chosen people and fills up the interval between the Old Testament and the New.]

II. HOW MEN DID WHAT THEY DID DO.

Through faith.

Faith helped them to see God on their side. *Cf.* Story of Elisha and his servant, 2 Kings vi. 14-17.

[*Illust.:* Thirsty man and drinking fountain—cannot *see* the water, but, believing in its existence, turns the tap and so slakes his thirst. So God a fountain of strength for all, but a fountain which we cannot see. Faith believes and acts accordingly, so gains strength from the hidden source.]

Faith, *i.e.*, just believing God and taking Him at His word. [*Illust.:* Bonaparte once to private soldier “Thank you, *captain!*” Soldier, at once, without question, took his place among the officers.]

III. APPLICATION.

We have hard things to do :—

1. *Some like subduing kingdoms.*

Subduing self—conquering difficulties.

[Illustrate by examples.]

2. *Some like facing lions and fire.*

The devil “like a roaring lion.”

Our own passions.

Great troubles.

3. *Ridicule and persecution.*

[Illustrate in each case.]

How can we do it ?

The same strength may be ours as that which nerved the old heroes. Take God at His word—trust Him—pray to Him—don't wait for some great need, seek His help for every need, so gain confidence, and, little by little, go on from strength to strength.

L.—LENT TO THE LORD.

"I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord."—I SAM. i. 28.

Picture out scene. [A hill surrounded by hills, as though in a cup, on it the old age-worn Tabernacle. Little party, man, woman, boy, bullock with flour and wine, approaches. Old man, dim-eyed, near Tabernacle. The interview. Hannah's story. The loan.] May remind us of another scene. [Font in church—clergyman—parents and child—*cf.* Baptismal Service, "We receive this child," &c.] So we, *lent to Christ*, and that when we were too small to say whether we should like to be lent or not! Think:—

I. THE LENDING, AND WHY IT WAS RIGHT.

1. *As to parents.*

A loan a good loan when it brings good interest. [Illust.: Money in clothing club or savings bank.] When we lend to God He always gives good interest, *cf.* I Sam. ii. 20, "Three sons and two daughters" "for the loan that is lent to the Lord." So Hannah lends God one child and gets five instead! 500 per cent. interest!

2. *As to child.*

It was a good thing for the boy. [Illust.: Sup-

pose, when grown up, you were told that you might have had a good place in the Queen's household—Queen quite willing, only mother could not decide for you. What say!] Here mother did decide for the boy, and he never blamed her, for he could not have had a better place. Taught there better than anywhere else, and servant to the best of all masters.

When our parents, sponsors, &c., made promise for us—lent *us* to Christ—what better thing could they have done for us! what better master could we have than Christ, in whose service we have been enrolled!

II. AFTER THE LENDING.

1. *How the child got on.*

(1.) Taught by the High Priest—always ready to help him.

(2.) His work always about the Tabernacle.

And when we are lent to God, who is our High Priest, always ready to teach and help us? A tabernacle, too, for us to look after. What? [*Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?*] [*Ye are the temple of God.*"]

2. *What the mother did.*

(1.) Looked after her loan. "Year by year" came up to Tabernacle.

(2.) Gave him a gift, yearly—a little priestly robe—to remind him of his duties, his service.

(3.) No doubt, prayed for him.

So our parents, having lent us, should look after us—remind us of our duties to the Master. Pray and work that we may be faithful servants. [Should

parents be present, special appeal may be made to them.]

And the children—lent to the Lord. Are you taking Samuel as your model?—working for the Master—looking after Tabernacle—keeping near the High Priest?

LI.—FIGHTING DRAGONS.

“Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.”—Ps. xci. 13.

Introductory.—Meaning of text (*cf.* v. 9.) Strength comes to those who trust God, so that they need fear no enemy. *E.g.*, Lions; *cf.* Daniel. [*Illustrative anecdote.*—Church in London. Lion sermon, preached every year. Man once on voyage, landed, found himself face to face with huge lion—no weapons, only prayer—lion walked away—so left money that his deliverance might be remembered every year.] The strength to do such things not ours, only, through faith, we lay hold on God’s strength. [*Illust.* : Old story of giant Geryon “the earth-born.” Hercules fought with him, but could not conquer, for he gained more strength by touching the ground. At last lifted him off the ground—then weak and soon killed. So we, *our* strength comes by touching God, *cf.* v. 1.] But:—

I. WHAT IS IT TO FIGHT DRAGONS?

Picture out story in Gen. iii.; *cf.* Rev. xii. 9-11. Who else had to face the same enemy and conquered him? [*Illustrate from Matt. iv. 1-11.*]

So at Baptism, what the first part of our Promise?

"Renounce, &c." [Picture out a Baptism in old time—person to be baptized first turned to the west—the cave of darkness—and said "I renounce thee, Satan"—then to the east, the home of light, and recited creed.] So the great Dragon we have to fight is—? and we may conquer by making God our refuge.

II. A GIRL WHO CONQUERED THE DRAGON.

Often see picture or representation of St. George and the Dragon. Sometimes, too, picture of a woman standing over a Dragon whom she has killed. Find her name in Prayer Book [see Calendar, 20th July]. Margaret lived at Antioch in Pisidia,—where Paul preached, Acts xiii. 14—more than 200 years after Paul (278 A.D.). The moon worshipped there as a man, and other false gods, but not as they used to be before Christ. Rulers determined to *make* people worship them. Picture scene. Magistrate (Olybrius), soldiers, altar, idols. People brought up—incense ready—enough to put some incense on altar before the idol—sign they worshipped it. One young girl, Margaret, brought up before the Prefect, refused to sprinkle incense, said "I am a Christian"—told them to do their worst—"tried by shame and torture," would not yield. Like Stephen, saw one at hand to help her—so killed, not conquered, but conquering.

When children—perhaps girls—say "so small and weak, can't conquer Satan"—think what this girl did! How? So we, "all things through Christ who strengthens us." Even a girl, like St. Margaret, may "trample the dragon under feet."

III. SOME OF OUR SPECIAL DRAGONS.

Not always same appearance to all—the great Dragon has many children.

E.g., Ill-temper, who hides in the cave called “sulkiness.” Unkindness, who lives near the cave “cruelty.” Indolence (sloth), &c. [Apply practically from every-day experience. *E.g.*, Boy at dinner—more and more and more—the Dragon “greediness”—must fight him—trample upon him.] Every day plenty of opportunities—all temptations to evil are dragons in disguise. Remember then to be on the watch, ready to fight when the moment comes. If, by prayer, we make the Lord our refuge, we too may “trample the dragon under feet.”

LII.

NOTE.—The story of St. Margaret may also be used in connection with Matt. xiii. 46 (“*one pearl of great price*”) which has sometimes been interpreted of the human soul, which Christ, the merchantman, seeks and buys. Sketch thus:—

Introduction.—A girl once called Margaret—why should parents have given her that name? Perhaps only because it sounded pretty, or perhaps because the lassie looked so pure and lovely that they thought no name could suit her better—for Margaret, in their language, meant “a Pearl.” Did they remember how pearls are made? (explain). Beauty and worth won through suffering! Anyway, she earned the name [narrate her story]. Never more

beautiful—more pearl-like—than when she conquered death by dying—“a pearl of great price” such as our Lord loves.

And if she is a model of what we may be—conquerors in spite of weakness—so we may learn, too, as perhaps she did, something from thinking about the pearl which she was called after. Think:—

1. Pearls are small.

Some very small—none very large—like children, babies and upwards. Some, perhaps, like black pearls—(query, “boys”)—not so beautiful, but may be more valuable. For, though small,

2. Pearls are valuable.

So children—“Oh, but I am not”—ask your mother what she thinks. And every one is valuable; ask the Father of us all in heaven—what did He give for us? The price paid shows the value. Ought to be careful of that for which He has paid so highly. For,

3. Pearls are easily tarnished, and when tarnished hard to clean.

How hard to regain one's character when once lost! Who can cleanse? [Holy Spirit ‘sanctifying’—like cleansing tarnished pearls.]

Lastly,

4. Pearls, beautiful in themselves, look best when they are set beautifully.

What the right setting for us? Is it not the righteousness of Christ? Sum up and apply.

LIII.—FORGETFULNESS.

"They . . . forgat his works."—*Ps. lxxviii. 10, 11.*

A Psalm of instruction containing reflections on the history of Israel:—How much God had done for the people; how continually they had forgotten His great works; how, in consequence of their forgetfulness, He had been compelled by trouble to refresh their memories. *Cf.* also the story of the Book of Judges—four stages constantly recurring—1. Forgetfulness of God. 2. God's anger kindled. 3. The cry of the troubled. 4. God delivers them. All springs from "Forgetfulness," a *little* sin, yet how far-reaching in its consequences.

I. HOW EASY IT IS TO FORGET.

Something makes a great impression, and we think the impression must last—but, like the impression of a seal on a child's arm, it soon fades and grows indistinct. We remember, perhaps, that an impression was made, but we do not retain the impression. Great sorrows. Great joys. Great mercies. All alike liable to be soon forgotten.

II. THE MISCHIEF OF FORGETFULNESS.

(1.) *In small matters.* What trouble sometimes

from "I quite forgot." Told not to do this thing or that thing, yet, again and again forget, and only realise our forgetfulness when we see the harm of it.

(2.) *In greater matters.* Cf. Israel; forgetfulness of God's dealings and its consequences. So also with ourselves. (Illustrate by special instances.)

III. HOW WE MAY GUARD AGAINST FORGETFULNESS.

1. In teaching Israel God gave them helps to memory—*memorials*—e.g., stones—pillars—annual festivals—all suggesting the question "Why is this?" So reviving the memory of what might otherwise have been forgotten.

Well for us, too, to have such memorials. *E.g.*, our Church Festivals. (What do they remind us of?) Marked Bibles. Birthday Text Books. Since we are so prone to forget, may well be thankful for any help to memory.

2. Not enough to have memorials. Must act upon their indications. They say "remember," we must make time to do as they tell us. *E.g.*, Marked Bible. "Why did I mark that?" Think over what it recalls. Pray over it. Remember and strengthen the old resolutions with which it is associated. By such means we shall really "remember" and show by our actions that we are doing so.

LIV.—THE SABBATH.

“The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.”

—MARK ii. 27.

[*Illust.* : Number of workmen—smoky, dirty, work—dirty streets, houses, &c. Employer has, near by, a beautiful park, where they may see the flowers and get air and exercise. Makes time for the men to go into this park, so that they may have necessary refreshment. What kind of master?

Suppose the men come to suspect their master—refuse to go into park and use it—prefer working amongst the smoke and dirt, though he says they may rest and have fresh air. Who will lose by such conduct? If the men do not use the park it is they who will most miss the good of it. The park not damaged by their not going into it. The men not made for the park, but the park for the men.]

Apply to ourselves. Like such men—plenty to do—apt to get tired and stupid. God gives us a day when we may rest; when we—our *spirits*, which are our real selves—may have fresh air. What day? Will it hurt God if we do not use the day? Who will it hurt most? “The Sabbath was—?” (*cf. Text*).

Think :—

I. NOT TO KEEP A SABBATH HURTS US.

[*Illust.* : If lamp always burning, what will happen to the wick? And if no oil put into the lamp, what must happen then?] So :—

1. If man always working—always living in same weary, worrying way—soon wear out. Sunday a rest day—a day for thorough change and quiet—use it and *wear* longer.

2. If man not use Sunday, get no new strength (*cf.* oil to lamp). So get dead and dark, even before he dies. Not last so long, and, the little time he does last, not so happy.

So then, the Sabbath for us :—(1.) That we may put out of mind and out of hand all the work of the week ; and (2.) That we may take in new strength—good thoughts—good resolutions—God's good Spirit. So do better and less anxiously the work of the coming week. Remember—Sabbath “*for man.*” If neglect it, *we* are the losers ! Not live so long—not live so happily—like foolish workmen who will not use park.

II. NOT TO KEEP THE SABBATH HURTS OTHERS.

Sabbath “*for man.*” not you or I only, but *all* men. If only for us, might break it to our own hurt, but only ourselves to blame or care about. But how if our selfishness makes others break it, or prevents others from enjoying it? [*Illust.* : Woman keeps shop open on Sunday. Ignorant, thoughtless, shortening her life and making it miserable. But she would not do it if no one bought on Sunday ! If *you* buy of her, what are you doing ?

Helping to kill her—helping to keep her from health and happiness.]

Conclusion.—Recapitulate and apply. “The Sabbath made for—?” How are we using it ourselves? What are we doing to help others so that they may get from it the good they ought to get?

LV.—OUR EYES.

"Having eyes, see ye not?"—MARK viii. 18.

[The teacher may *cf.* John ix., which might be read as the lesson previous to address.]

In learning grammar we learn about "degrees of comparison." Some adjectives "regular," some "irregular." What about "good?" (better, best.) May use them, to-day, to help our memories.

How many eyes have you? Let us see:—

I. GOOD EYES.

Eyes of the body. Two of them. How they light up a face, like windows in a house. What a difference between a picture of a person and a statue! So much of what we call the "expression" depends upon the eyes.

Wonderful, too, if we take them to pieces. Lens. Retina, &c. (describe).

If our body is the house we live in, then our eyes are the windows we look out of.

1. *Be thankful for them.*

Some people blind. What a difference! Can you help any such people—lending your eyes to see for them?

2. *Be careful to use them well.*

How much more some people see than others! [*cf.* "Eyes and no Eyes" in "Evenings at Home."] How much better things some people see than

others! Some seem only to look out for foolish or even dirty things; and all of us, surely, need to pray "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity."

II. BETTER EYES.

Eyes of the mind. Shut eyes of the body and think. Something hard to understand; "Now I see it!" In this way can "see" yesterday—can "look back" and "look forward." Hope that these eyes may still serve us even though the first should fail.

III. BEST EYES.

Eyes of Spirit. Made to see goodness and God. To see, here, is to love. Not enough to say "God is Love," but to know and feel it. Man could see once, but blindness came (sin.) God opens blind eyes, but how may we learn to see Him? [Illust.: Sun too bright for us to bear the splendour, but we can look at its reflection in some pool.] So a mirror in which we may see God—our Lord Jesus Christ, and an eye-glass through which we may look towards the mirror,—Holy Scripture.

Conclusion.—Best for us to have all these different kinds of eyes—but the best of them all are those last mentioned, by means of which we may see God. Christ says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," now "through a glass darkly," but one day in a beautiful city where the glory of God's presence makes perpetual sunshine. If we want to share the sight let us see to it that our hearts are pure, otherwise, though we have the "Good Eyes" and the "Better Eyes," we shall still have the "Best Eyes" blinded.

LVI.—HEARING AND DOING.

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.”—JAS. i. 22.

(*Cf.* context. Epistle for 5th Sunday after Easter.)

St. James, our Lord's brother. His teaching reminds us of our Lord's teaching. *E.g.*, Once in a crowd, listening to Jesus, woman cried out, “What a blessed woman your mother must be.” Remember answer—“More blessed, they who hear the word and keep it.” We often think it would have been pleasant to have seen Christ; but far better to obey Him. Text teaches the same truth. Two sorts of people mentioned—hearers and doers. St. James says it is good to hear God's Word, but not *much* good unless we do it also. All “*hearers*” to-day, let us think about “hearing” and “doing.”

I. HEARING.

Good in its way—far better to pay attention than to be inattentive. But people hear so differently. [*Illust.* : Old Jewish proverb, four kinds of hearers: *Sponges* swallow everything. *Funnels*, what goes in at one ear comes out at the other. *Filters*, keep only the dregs. *Sieves*, keep the wheat and reject the chaff.] Remember one of our Lord's parables about hearing. Preacher, like sower. Hearers, like ground. “*Wayside*,” “*rocky*,” “*thorny*,” “*good*” ground—

the hard-hearted, the half-hearted, the weak-hearted, and the whole-hearted.

Good to hear, but “Take heed how ye hear.” St. James uses two illustrations (*cf. context*):—

1. To be satisfied with hearing is to miscalculate, for to *know* one’s debts is not the same as *paying* them.

2. To be satisfied with hearing is like being satisfied with the reflection of our faces in a looking-glass. The glass shows when they are dirty, but looking at the glass will not clean them !

II. DOING.

The best hearers make the best doers ; it is the bad hearers who think hearing is enough. Hearing shows what is right, but we need

“To know what’s right, not only so,
But also *practise* what we know.”

Take the looking-glass illustration. God’s Word, like the glass, shows us what we ought to do, so that we may be as God would have us be. Not enough to look or listen, and then forget all about it. Must “continue therein.” Keep on looking and doing, so at last see a better reflection. Sermons tell us about God’s Word—turn our faces towards the looking-glass. Good to ask after a sermon, “What new thing can I do because of it ? ”

All “hearing” of this kind is a means to learning about our duty. Religion is *doing* our duty. Not only learning our Catechism but living it [*cf. the similitude of the Houses built on the Sand and on Rock*].

Conclusion.—One thing we have heard, again and again,—Christ's "new commandment," "Love one another." Know what love means? Be always trying to help others. Who wants help? Mother? The little brother or sister? The poor sick child, &c. "Love one another. Be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only."

LVII.—TEMPERANCE.

“Temperate in all things.”—I Cor. ix. 25.

Seen a chemist making up medicine—a little out of one bottle and a little out of another—then all mixed up together. So before taking medicine, “When taken to be well shaken”—otherwise sweet might get to the bottom and bitter to the top, or *vice versa*—wants to be *well mixed*.

Used to be thought that men and women, boys and girls, were all like bottles of medicine—if you cracked a bottle the medicine oozed out, and if you cracked a boy blood oozed out. Four fluids called *humours* said to be mixed inside:—*choler, melancholy, phlegm, blood*—sometimes too much of one, sometimes of another—sometimes one uppermost, sometimes another. If the unpleasant humour was uppermost, the person was *ill-humoured*—if the pleasant, he was *good-humoured*. Sometimes people would try to draw off some of the ill-humour—a passionate boy would be taken to the barber, and the barber would tie up his arm, make a cut, and let out some blood.

Very important to get the humours well-mixed. If people were like medicine it was only right that they should be like nice medicine—so sometimes ill-humoured and good-humoured boys were called ill-

or good-tempered *i.e.*, ill-mixed or well-mixed—sometimes the 'good' left out, and a well-mixed man called a 'temperate' man. That which taught people how to get mixed properly was called *Temperance*.

"Ah! but we don't believe, now-a-days, in people being like bottles of medicine!"

Well, perhaps, not just as they used to believe in it—yet boys and girls, &c., sometimes very like bottles of medicine—sweet—sour—bitter, &c. Some, too much of one thing; some, too much of another. A *temperate* man may still be taken as a well-mixed man. *Temperance* still the art of getting well-mixed.

Think of a few things which want to be mixed up right, that our lives may be Temperate, *e.g.*, there are feelings—and thoughts—and actions.

I. SOMETIMES OUR FEELINGS TOO MUCH FOR US.

Boy soon "flies into a passion"—like soda-water with too much gas in it. We want thought to keep the feelings down—kind actions to draw them off—*cf.* Naaman who "lost his temper" and so nearly missed being cured of his leprosy.

II. SOMETIMES TOO MUCH THOUGHT.

Some one in trouble—feeling prompts us to help—but we think of all the inconvenience, and our thought hinders us from action—often we need more thought, but sometimes thought kills kindly feeling. [Illustrate by examples.]

III. SOMETIMES ACT HASTILY.

No good reason—see a stone, and must needs pick

it up and throw it—want thought to control action.
[Illustrate—*e.g.*, Reuben a hasty man.]

How get rightly mixed? Go to chemist if you can't get your medicine mixed rightly. So when we want mixing, go to God who has made us, and who can make us what we ought to be. Mix up prayer with everything, and mix praise, also, to flavour it. Temperate people are they, mostly, who act upon St. Paul's advice: Phil. iv. 6.

LVIII.—OUR TREASURY.

“The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through [rather ‘in’] Christ Jesus.”
—PHIL. iv. 7.

Defoe has a story, “Captain Jack.” Little boy, beggar, gets hold of lot of money. Quite happy before, then wretched, not know where to put it. Can’t sleep because of it. At last finds hole in hollow tree—surely safe there; puts it in, and it drops down inside! Had a treasure, and wanted safe place for it. So now people with money put in bank. But even banks not always safe; sometimes man in charge not trustworthy. Steals money, or lets it get stolen. So besides *safe place* want also *sure keeper*. Text tells of a treasure we have, and a safe place to put it in, and a sure keeper to look after it. Think—

I. OUR TREASURE.

“*Hearts and minds*”—that which loves, and that which thinks. Very valuable (Prov. iv. 23, &c.). How often *love* wrong things and *think about* wrong things. [Balaam, Demas (2 Tim. iv. 10), and for “the mind” (Ezek. xxxviii. 10, 11).] When we do, then put our treasure in bad places. Cf. Matt. vi. 21.

II. THE TREASURY.

Safe place where we put treasure—text says “in Christ Jesus.” How put hearts there? Get them to love Him, then can’t love bad things. [Illustrate from Luke vii. 36-50. Poor woman had been putting treasure of her heart in bad places. Finds Jesus, puts it *there*. Does what she can to show her love for Him. See what He said (ver. 47).] So too with *minds*; think of Him, and can’t well be thinking of bad things at same time. Cf. Col iii. 2; Phil. iv. 8.

But must *put* them there, just as *put* money in bank. [No use *keeping* money yourself and *saying*, “What a safe place the bank is.”] How *put* them? [How put money in bank? Take it there and ask managers to take care of it.] So take hearts and minds to Jesus; ask Him to keep them. He never refuses to accept deposits, as banks sometimes do (John vi. 37).

III. THE TREASURER.

Sure keeper wanted as well as safe place. So here, “The peace of God.”

[Great deal of treasure in Bank of England. Every evening soldiers come tramping up Cheapside to look after it.]

The treasurer here not a band of soldiers, but *Peace*. [Cf. John xiv. 26, 27. Christ’s legacy to His disciples “Peace,” *His* “Peace”; but this was one with the coming of “The Comforter.” When Peace is said to “keep the heart,” it is because the Holy Spirit is the Guardian.]

For us the treasury the most important matter. *We* have "hearts and minds," our treasure. Where are we putting them? They can't have a safe keeper unless put in right place. Pray, "O Lord Jesus, see to the keeping of my heart and mind."

APPENDIX.

OUR COPY, AND HOW TO COPY IT.

[Enlarged from Outline VI.]

Most of you, I suppose, have already begun to learn writing. At first, perhaps, you started with a slate ; you tried to make straight strokes, and then went on to the strokes with curves which we used to call "pot-hooks and hangers." Now you have got a copy-book, and write in it with pen and ink ; you try to make your own writing as much like the copy as possible ; you hope, one of these days, to make it *quite* like the copy.

Have you ever thought that grown-up people once learned writing in just the same way ! Your teacher, who is now so particular with you, once made blots and smudges and mistakes himself ; he, too, was a long time learning before his writing was at all respectable.

Even people whom we read about in the Bible once had to learn to write. If you had lived in Palestine nearly nineteen hundred years ago you might perhaps have had for a schoolfellow a little

boy called Simon ; if so, you and he might have had to learn writing together, and, most likely, you would have learnt it very much as you do now. I do not think though that in those days you would have had slates or copy-books—the teacher, I expect, would have spread sand upon the floor, and then he would have taken a stick and traced out a copy in the sand. You and Simon and the other scholars would have had to try and copy the copy, either with sticks or with your fingers, upon the sand in front of you. A stick or your fingers would have had to do instead of a pen, and the sanded floor would have been your copy-book, but you would have had to try just as hard as you do now to make your writing like the copy.

Any way, the little boy Simon, who did live then, learnt writing from a copy, and when he grew up and could write for himself without a teacher, he remembered the way in which he had been taught. When he was a man he came to know Jesus, and Jesus gave him a new name, and called him Peter. Afterwards he wrote a letter which you will find in your Bible near the end—it is called the First Epistle of St. Peter. If you look at the 21st verse of the second chapter in that letter, you will see that he says something there about Jesus “leaving us an example.” He was thinking, when he wrote that, of the way in which he used to learn to write. What he means is, that Jesus has left us a copy which we have got to try and imitate, just as we do the copies in our copy-books.

Let us try to think a little about this copy or example. If it reminded St. Peter of the way in

which he learned to write, perhaps the difficulties we find in learning to write may help us better to understand it.

I think if St. Peter could put into words for us now all that he was thinking about then he would say something like this: Learning to *write* well is very much like learning to *live* well. Our lives are something like copy-books. Each new year is a new page; if we have made a mess of the last page we must "turn over a new leaf" and try to do better with the next. In *writing*, we have to copy the copy which is set us; and in *living*, Jesus has given us a copy which we must also try and copy; we have to make *our* lives as much as possible like *His*.

Now, you know, in learning to write, the *first* thing we have to do is *to look well at the copy*. It is not enough to read it, or to glance over it, we must look into it and study it. One letter has a number of curious curves, we have to find out how *they* are made; all the down strokes are at equal distances from one another, we must get some notion what that distance is. Some letters are crossed and some are dotted; we have to look very carefully that we may be sure to cross and dot ours in the right places. If we do not *look well at the copy* we never can learn to copy it.

In trying to copy this other copy which our Lord has left us we must set to work in just the same way. When we read the story of His life we cannot well help thinking what a *beautiful* life it was. It is just copper-plate by the side of our lives; nothing uneven, nothing crooked, all perfect from first to last. But if we want to *copy* the copy, it is not

enough to think how beautiful it is ; we must examine it to see what makes it beautiful ; we must find out how it comes about that nothing is crooked or uneven.

I know some people who would be quite offended if I asked them whether they had got a Bible ; there is hardly a house now-a-days, in which there is not at least a Testament. But sometimes when I ask people to lend me a Bible or a Testament, the book has to be looked for in such curious places that I am sure it cannot be often opened. One old lady whom I used to know, kept hers at the bottom of a great big box ; there it lay buried under a heap of dresses, and it had to be regularly dug up whenever it was wanted. Often, when the Bible is a small one, it has to be taken from some high shelf, where it has not even been dusted lately. If it is very large, and has perhaps been taken in in parts and well bound afterwards, you may see it on a side table covered with a piece of crochet work, and with quite a little pyramid of books, or, it may be, a bird-cage standing on the top of it. The people who own these Bibles all know something of the story which we read about in the New Testament ; they think that it is very beautiful, they know that it is meant to teach them ; only they seem quite to forget that it has to be looked into and studied. They are like boys and girls learning to write who keep their copy covered by the blotting paper ; they do not live like the copy because they have never tried to study it.

Our copy is set down for us by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John. It is not a *writing*

copy, it is a *living* copy ; one which is meant to stand at the head of all the leaves in the Book of Life, and which we are always to be trying to make our lives more like. *Look well at the copy*, that is the first thing. Read about Jesus, and remember what you read ; think about it and ask questions about it ; get to know as much as possible about the life you are to try and imitate ; if you want to copy well, you must study the copy well.

The next thing we are taught in learning to write is that we must not only look well at the copy first, we must *keep looking at the copy* afterwards. You know how often boys and girls forget this, and what lamentable mistakes they make in consequence. I remember when I learnt to write I used to begin a clean page with all manner of good resolutions. I would look at the copy, and make up my mind to write exactly like that ; there should not be a single blot or mistake from the first line to the last. What care I used to take over the first line ! Every letter I looked up to see just what the copy was like ; it must have taken me nearly half a minute to cross a *t* or to dot an *i* ; and so, by taking the greatest pains, I managed to write something decent. But when I began the next line I could *not* keep myself from thinking how very nice the last one looked, and, instead of copying the copy, I tried to copy my own good writing. The third line, perhaps, I copied the second, and the fourth the third, and so on ; until, when I reached the end of the page and looked back, each line was worse written than the line before it, and the last line was full of mistakes and the worst written line of all.

After a while, when I listened to what my teacher had to say, and learnt to do what he told me, the pages came to look quite different. Then, when I had written a line, I would just compare it with the copy to see if there were any mistakes, but afterwards I would try and forget it, and write the next line quite as carefully, looking up, letter by letter, to the copy, so as to make sure of keeping right. Writing in this way, each new line grew rather better than the line before it, and the last line in each page would be more like the copy than all the rest.

It is the same, too, in learning to live, we have to *keep looking at the copy*, or we shall be certain to go wrong. Beginning a new day is like beginning a new line, we must not think too much about the yesterdays. Every day we must start fresh, and look at the copy just as carefully. I once knew a boy who made up his mind one Sunday to be all that a boy should be until next Sunday came. He was not going to be selfish, or greedy, or passionate, or to do anything wrong all the week through. On the Sunday he got on fairly well ; he remembered how Jesus was obedient to His parents, and always kind to those about Him, and he tried to be kind and obedient too. When he got up on Monday morning he thought to himself, "I really was good yesterday, I did keep from doing wrong, and I felt quite happy. To-day I must be as good as I was yesterday, I must take care to behave myself just as well as I did then." Long before the week was over all his good resolutions had been broken ; he could not help making mistakes when he tried to

copy himself. We have not got to try and be as good as we were yesterday. Every day we have to try that we may become a little more like Jesus. If we want to *write* well, we must forget the lines that we have written, and look off from them to the copy which lies above them. If we want to *live* well, we must do just the same, forget how good we were yesterday, and look off from all the yesterdays to Jesus Christ Himself, who is the same perfect copy, "yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

There is a *third* thing which I think it may help us to think about. I have said that the first lesson is, *Look well at the copy*; and the second lesson is *keep looking at the copy*; the third lesson is about the pen: it says, *always keep the pen pointed in the same direction*.

I used to think, at one time, that much the easiest way to write was to let the end of the pen point anyhow. I could not make out why I need bother about the pen-holder, so long as the nib was doing its duty. I daresay my way was the *easiest* way, but easy ways are very often bad ways, and, happily, my teacher was a wise man, and would not let me have my own way; "Do keep the end of the holder pointed towards your right ear," he used to say, "your letters can never have the proper slope if the pen keeps pointing in different directions!" When I came to think over the matter, I found that what my teacher said was true. In the copy all the letters sloped beautifully the same way, but *my* letters sloped all manner of ways, and did not look at all beautiful. When, after a great deal of trouble, I persuaded my pen to keep pointing

towards my ear, I soon found that all my letters grew much better than they used to be.

We fill up the pages in our copy-books with *letters*, but we fill up the pages in our lives with *actions*. Pens make the letters, but *our wills* make the actions. If we want our actions to slope properly, to be what we call *consistent*, we must keep our wills, just like our pens, always pointing in the same direction. When we look at our copy, when, that is, we study the life of Jesus, we find that *He* always did just that which it was right to do. When we come to ask how it was that *He* always did what was right, the answer is that *His will* always pointed one way. *He* did not do anything only because *He* thought it pleasant. *He* always did that very thing which *He* knew *His Father* wanted *Him* to do. *His* motto was, “Not *My* will but *Thine* be done!” *His* will, whatever *He* did, was always pointing up to *God’s* will.

There are a great many things which we should all *like* to do, but if we want to live rightly we must think, not what *we* should like best, but what *God* likes, and then we must do *that* whether *we* like it or not. For instance, sometimes on a fine day I should like to take a walk and enjoy myself, but just then *God* wants me to be working for *Him*. If I am to do right I must make my will point towards *God’s* will; I must say to myself, “Never mind what you would like, you have got to do what *God* wishes, and *God* wishes you to be at work!” If I like something so much that I go and do what I like instead of what *God* wishes, when I come afterwards to look at what I have done it all seems

sloping the wrong way ; my will has not been pointing straight, and therefore I have been living crookedly.

A little girl once wanted dreadfully to run out into the fields and get some buttercups. She had almost found her bonnet when her mother came down-stairs and asked her to rock baby's cradle. She knew she *ought* to do what she was told, and you know "I *ought*" always means "God wishes." But she wanted the buttercups so badly that she couldn't stop to think about the "ought." She seized her bonnet and ran away, and never came back till she had got the buttercups. You see her will was not kept pointed the right way, and I know, by the way in which she crept into the house when she came back, that she was quite sure herself that she had been doing wrong. It is a very hard matter always to keep our wills straight ; even Jesus Himself found it hard, but, though it was hard, He always did it ; if we want to be copying our copy we must try and do it too.

These, then, are the three things which we have to remember, if we want to take as our copy the life of our Lord Jesus :—

First. We must look well at the copy.

Secondly. We must *keep* looking at the copy.

Thirdly. We must let our wills always point up to God's will, just as our Lord, who has left us the copy, always made His will point up to God's.

I daresay some of you will think that all this is very difficult. Well, there is always some difficulty in learning anything that is worth learning. It is difficult to learn to write well ; it is still more diffi-

cult to learn to live well ; we can neither write well nor live well unless we are willing to take pains. There is, however, one thing more which I want you to think about and remember ; it may not make the difficult things seem easy, but it ought to be a help to you in doing them. I don't suppose I should ever have learned writing if I had not had a teacher, and my teacher was a very good teacher, he taught me to take pains because he took such pains with me. In learning to live, too, it is not enough to have a copy, we want a teacher who will stand by us and show us continually how to copy it. *My* writing master used to write the copies himself on slips of cardboard, and so I always felt quite sure that he *must* know how they should be copied. Jesus, who has left us a copy for living, has also promised to be our teacher ; whenever we are in any difficulty we have only to ask Him, and He will show us what we ought to do, and guide our wills that we may do it rightly. It seems almost impossible that a boy or girl who can hardly make even straight strokes, should be able to write a line so well as to look like copper-plate ; yet boys and girls who pay attention to their teachers do come, at last, to be good writers. It seems still more impossible, when we read about the perfect life of Jesus, that we, with all our faults and sins, should ever come to be like Him ; yet the Lord Jesus Himself has promised to be our teacher, and He says that, if we trust Him, and do exactly as He tells us, one of these days we shall be satisfied when we awake after His likeness. What a wonderful thought, is it not ? that we may grow to be like our Lord ! So like

Him that not only shall we be satisfied ourselves, but even God will be satisfied with us ! Is it not worth while taking pains when we have such a hope as this set before us ? Does not the promise of His help at all times encourage us to do our very best ?

I said at the beginning that when St. Peter wrote about Jesus Christ leaving us an *example*, he was thinking about the time when he first learnt to copy a writing copy. Perhaps some of you may have wondered how I could have known what he was thinking about. Let me try to make you understand how I knew, and then before I finish let me try to tell you how St. Peter himself learnt to copy the copy which he talks about.

St. Peter—Simon, as his friends called him—was not an Englishman, and he did not write his letters in English. We can read them now in English because they have been translated for us; but if we want to know what he was thinking of when he wrote them, we must get some one to tell us who can understand the language he wrote in. Now in the letter which St. Peter wrote he did not say exactly, “Christ has left us an *example*;” he said, “Christ has left us a *writing-copy*,” and though the two things mean just the same, he must have been thinking when he said “writing-copy” of the time when he first learnt to write.

But if Simon told others to copy the copy, how did he copy it himself? He found it just as hard a matter as we find it. He had to learn just as we do, little by little, line by line. We find from what St. Paul says in one of his letters that even after St. Peter had been learning a long time, he still some-

times made sad blunders. Instead of copying the copy, he once and again forgot to look at it, and when he forgot to look at it he lived worse and made mistakes. The time came for him to write the last line in the last page of the book of life. He had almost learnt how to copy by then, and I am sure that he trusted the Great Teacher more than he ever had done before ; but even then he was not quite perfect, he was only going on unto perfection. There is a story about those last days, which I think must be almost a true story, at any rate it may encourage us to persevere, as he did, to the end.

St. Peter was an old man, and, as we are told, he was then in Rome. Now at that time, in Rome, Jesus Christ's disciples were badly treated, and St. Peter heard that the Roman emperor had determined to have him put to death. He knew that the death would be a cruel and painful death ; his Master had told him about it long before, as we may see in the last chapter of St. John's Gospel, and when he thought of it he got frightened. If he had kept looking at the copy, he would have seen that Jesus, when His death drew near, instead of shrinking from the shame and torture, "steadfastly set His face" to meet it. St. Peter, however, if the story be true, looked off from the copy and only thought of the difficult line before him ; he determined to escape the danger, and started by night to get away from Rome. He passed through the city gates safely, and was beginning to think he had got clear away. Then, quite unexpectedly, he saw some one coming towards him. He knew at once who it was ; it was Jesus Christ Himself. "Lord," he said, "whither

goest Thou?" "I am going," the Master answered, "to take your place and be crucified again." Peter turned back at once; the vision showed him his mistake; once more he fixed his eyes upon the copy, and allowed his enemies to do their worst. They found him next day in Rome, and condemned him to die as a follower of Christ. A little later and he, too, was crucified, finishing his life's last line more like the copy than any line before it.

We must not be discouraged if we make mistakes; we must just do as St. Peter did, acknowledge our mistakes when we make them, and, looking once more to the copy, ask our teacher to teach us to do better.

We are just beginning a new year; turning over a new page in the copy-book of life. There is the same copy for us to copy which was at the head of the page last year; when we get to the end of the page shall we have learnt to copy it better? Remember, we must *study* the copy; we must *keep* looking up to it; we must let our wills always point towards God's will; then, if we ask our teacher's help, He will teach us how to copy rightly, and, little by little, depend upon it, our lives will grow to be like His.

"We learn to live, as we learn to write,
By keeping the copy well in sight;
The copy left us by Christ our Lord,
In that life which the Gospels four record.

"Old Time gives us each a copy-book,
Which all may see who know how to look;
Years are the pages, and days the lines,
Our wills the pens, and our deeds the signs.

“To copy the copy, first of all
We must study its letters great and small ;
We can never copy unless we know
What that copy is which the Gospels show.

“In the second place, again and again
We must look to the copy or all is vain ;
Looking *off* from all we have tried to do,
Looking *up* where the copy meets our view.

“Our wills, too, the pens, must be pointed right,
Or we cannot live as the sons of light ;
Who will not say, ‘Thy will be done,’
Can never copy God’s own dear Son.

“It is very hard to learn how to live,
But our Teacher has promised His help to give ;
He gave the copy, and still stands by,
To teach all those who will only try.

“One of these days, by God’s good grace,
We shall see our Teacher face to face,
The copy-book, used and laid aside,
We shall stand, *in His likeness*, satisfied.”

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